



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
June 12 – 19, 2014

Table of Contents

The following news stories are divided into the following sections.

Aboriginal Arts & Culture	2
Aboriginal Business & Finance	31
Aboriginal Community Development	33
Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement	47
Aboriginal Education & Youth	55
Aboriginal Health	83
Aboriginal Identity & Representation	94
Aboriginal Inequality & Poverty	107
Aboriginal Jobs & Labour	114
Aboriginal Politics	116
Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources	125
Land Claims & Treaty Rights	136
Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women	149
Special Topic: Residential Schools & '60s Scoop	150
Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations	179

Aboriginal Arts & Culture

We're obsessed with Tanya Tagaq, the terrifying, caribou-hunting, Inuit throat singer/activist playing Bonnaroo today

by [Kelsey McKinney](#) | June 12, 2015 2:26 PM
Tanya Tagaq

Tanya Tagaq doesn't need words to convey emotion.

Instead, her third album *Animism* — released last year — taps into the raw sounds that define human feeling. At times she sounds euphorically happy and dreamlike; other sounds are terrified — or *terrifying*. Tagaq is a part of the Inuit tribe now living in far northern Canada. She grew up in an igloo listening to Inuit throat singing, a form of ☐ounselo noise making that is usually sung in duets.

Today Tagaq performs at Bonnaroo — her biggest American stage yet — and she's certainly an artist worth paying attention to. Last July, Tanya Tagaq beat out Drake and Arcade Fire to win the 2014 Polaris Prize for album of the year. At the award ceremony she performed two songs off her new album and, according to [reports from the event](#), the audience was completely enraptured.

The first song she performed was “Uja,” which begins with simple drums. A minute in, though, it becomes desperate. Tagaq's voice changes, overlaying sounds in a breathless, rapidly increasing chanting rhythm that makes your heart race. Soon her voice is layered on top of itself; the chanting, the gasping and the growling taking hold of you and sucking you into her world — and then suddenly, it stops.

There is a moment of simple drum rhythm and in its simplicity, it's easy to yearn for Tagaq's voice to return. It does a few seconds later, but it's gentler, and calmer. “Uja” is under three minutes long — a short, compact brush with fear and anxiety.

What makes this performance by Tagaq so intriguing isn't her beautiful red dress or the stark lighting, but how much control she has over the sounds coming out of her mouth and how far deep within her they seem to come from. It's sexual. It's hypnotizing. And it evokes emotions so much deeper than much of the sounds being produced today.

On a screen behind her, the names of 1,200 indigenous women scroll upward. They have all been lost or murdered in the last 30 years.

“If they are good shows, I pretty much lose consciousness,” Tagaq [told the Guardian](#) in May. “Nothing exists, but it's not scary, it's total peace. I will hear a tiny voice, and it

sounds like it is far away and it gets louder and louder, and then I counsel it's coming from my mouth."

Though her music is wordless, Tagaq is certainly not. She's been outspoken about sexual assault, drug abuse, and violence in indigenous counseling. "During my childhood, everyone was trying to throw away Inuk culture," she told [the Guardian](#), "It has taken me 40 years to have a true pride in who I am."

The first track on *Animism* is a cover of the Pixies song "Caribou." It's the only song on the album in English. It's also one of the weakest songs on the album, lacking the character and desperation Tagaq creates through her throat singing. But Tagaq told the *Guardian* she did it because "the idea of Caribou being sung by someone who eats and hunts caribou, is... just funny to me." It's a reclaiming of the culture that has been dissolving for hundreds of years due to colonization, hunting laws, sexual assault, and outright racism.

She's an artist, and Tagaq also views herself as an activist, which has stirred up controversy. When she posted a throwback photo of herself and her daughter posing with a hunted seal, Tagaq received backlash from animal rights activists and PETA. Tagaq was defiant, claiming that seals and their pelts are some of the only ways for her people to survive and make money. During her acceptance speech for the Polaris prize she shouted "Fuck PETA!," unrepentant and unfazed.

It's that passion and frustration — raw human emotions — that infiltrate her music and make it so beautiful. Without words, Tagaq manages to perfectly express what so many fail to do through art — what it means, and what it feels like, to be human.

Direct Link: <http://fusion.net/story/149701/were-obsessed-with-tanya-tagag-the-terrifying-caribou-hunting-inuit-throat-singeractivist-playing-bonnaroo-today/>

Cree hip-hop trio The NorthStars release debut album 'Dreams'

Group from Nemaska, Que., plan to open recording studio later this summer

By Susan Bell, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 13, 2015 8:15 AM CT Last Updated: Jun 13, 2015 8:15 AM CT



Keith Lacroix, left, Elton J. Salt and Gary Jolly are The NorthStars, a hip-hop group from Nemaska, Que., that hopes to help Cree youth. (N'we Jinan)

Members of the Cree hip-hop group The NorthStars credit the power of music with turning their lives around.

The NorthStars are made up of Elton J. Salt, Keith Lacroix and Gary Jolly, all of Nemaska, Que., a James Bay Cree community of 700 people about 300 kilometres northwest of Chibougamau.

“I can really say that music saved my life,” says Salt, 24.

‘When kids hear their songs for the first time, they literally cry.’ - *David Hodges*

Before music helped him, Salt says he was drinking a lot and hanging with a bad crowd.

“I was going on a really dark, dark path, “ says Salt.

Two years ago, he was attacked and beaten. For him, it was a turning point.

“Music is a really powerful and strong thing that people can use,” says Salt. “My life changed a lot when I took music into my life.”

The NorthStars are officially releasing their debut CD [*Dreams*](#) this Sunday, June 14 in the Nemaska Recreation Hall. They also recently released [a video of one of the tracks on the album, *Champions*](#).

Jolly agrees with Salt about the power of music.

“I almost lost my kids because of drinking,” says the 29-year-old father of three.

“I had to go for help to stop drinking. I finished a detox program and came back to the community and got my children back.”

Salt and Jolly say they hope their story will inspire others.

The NorthStars have also received funding from the Nemaska Band Council and Cree Nation Government to build a recording studio in the small community. It will be the first music studio in the Cree Nation, according to Salt. They hope to use it to help Cree youth choose a healthy and productive path.

“There is always the young kid out there who are shy to interact with people. Even to just go say hi to people,” says Salt.



The NorthStars recently released their debut video for the song Champions. (N’we Jinan)

“Those are the type of people we want to reach out to and we want to show that music can be a good, educational thing.”

The group is being mentored into the music industry through the [*N’we Jinan*](#) project, a popular music education program that toured all the Cree communities in James Bay in the spring of 2014. *N’we Jinan* has also recently launched a record label by the same name. The NorthStars are the second group signed to the label.

For *N’we Jinan* founder and music educator, David Hodges, The NorthStars are inspiring because of the effort they have put into their transformation.

“When kids hear their songs for the first time, they literally cry,” says Hodges.

“And I ask them ‘Why are you crying?’ and they tell me it’s the first time they have ever been proud of themselves. I feel very honoured and blessed (to be part of this project).”

The music studio is expected to open later this summer.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/cree-hip-hop-trio-the-northstars-release-debut-album-dreams-1.3108068>

The hard, important truths of Indigenous literature

The “truth” in Truth and Reconciliation is not a surprise to readers of Canadian and First Nations stories.



The author Robert Arthur Alexie by the cabin in Fort McPherson, NWT, to which his family of four was moved off the land.

By: Noah Richler Published on Sat Jun 13 2015

Ten years ago now, ☐ounselor the country for a book of mine, I met the Gwich'in author Robert Arthur Alexie, and we quickly became comfortable with each other. I hesitate to say that we became friends, because I'm not sure how capable a man with such terrifying private demons was of “friendship,” but we had a love of Canada and books in common.

We met in his band office in Inuvik. It was the week of the summer solstice — also Aboriginal Day in Canada — and “1876” was scrawled across the Saturday of his office calendar pinned to the wall. June 25 was “General Custer Day” and Alexie, grinning, said, “After work a bunch of us are going to get together and beat up a few white people. Wanna join us?”

I knew then that we'd get along.

Alexie, who died a year ago this week, was the author of a couple of works of fiction, the names needing little explanation in light of this last week's [Truth and Reconciliation](#) news. *Porcupines and China Dolls*, originally published in 2002, was the first of them and the reason I was in Inuvik. The title referred to the look-a-like brush haircuts and powdered faces of native children taken from their families and put into residential

schools and made uniform, as happened to Robert. The second, issued in 2005, was *The Pale Indian*, which told the story of a native child adopted into a white Calgary family.

Porcupines and China Dolls is a classic of Canadian literature. It is a novel of often dizzying intensity, whether describing the wrecked living quarters of disorientated residential school survivors barely managing to get by, or utterly unforgettable scenes of drum dancing and purgative spiritual healing that approach, to my mind, Jack Kerouac's ability to evoke music and tempo with words, as in the wonderful nightclub jazz scene of *On the Road*.

Alexie had been the chief negotiator for the Gwich'in in their land claim, settled in 1992, with the Canadian government. He also spent time in rehab in Scarborough. Whatever the ups and downs of his life, his dark humour never left him. One of my favourite of his stories involves a Gwich'in man picked up by the RCMP and made to chop the winter's wood for the station. The incident ranks among the slightest of the pandemic settler-Canadian abuses of natives that the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has turned into written, archival fact, but upsetting enough.

In Alexie's story, the Gwich'in man is let go when the task is done, after which the RCMP discovers that their suspect has cut every single log two inches too long for their stove. A Trickster, perfectly.

In this week so momentous and important not just for the native peoples of Canada, but for all of us, I find myself thinking back to Robert, and to other First Nations writers with whom I have been privileged to work in small ways over the years.

To Tomson Highway, whose own Trickster's stance is to argue that residential school was the best thing to happen him, as he would not otherwise have learned to write or to become a classical pianist — a view that will not be popular now (though one only has to read his brilliant novel, *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, to learn just how ambiguous and nefarious the experience was).

Or to Louise Halfe, her Plains Cree name Sky Dancer, whose poetry has addressed brutality towards aboriginal girls and women unforgettably — as in her poem "Maintain the Right," in which a policeman who has picked up a 16-year-old native girl "drove/ down a country road/ Stopped and pushed her out. Ordered a blowjob. She didn't understand./ He pushed her head/ between his legs/ Said a girl dressed like her/ gave head/ to cops like him." (The upset you may feel reading these lines is the least homage to be paid).

To Thomas King and Joseph Boyden, whose literary triumphs have thrust each into the spokesperson's roles they have taken on so ably, but also Lisa Charleyboy, Zacharias Kunuk, Patti LaBoucane-Benson, Lee Maracle, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, and a host of others. First Nations and Inuit artists are a vital part of the Canadian fabric and ours would be an infinitely lesser culture without their integral, nation-defining contribution.

Literature is not a frivolous pursuit but one that points the way. Anyone who reads Canadian stories with any alacrity has long understood the distress of the country's aboriginal population, the effect of the residential schools, and the shame of the country's de facto racism that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has brought to the fore.

The "truth" in TRC is not a surprise to readers of Canadian and First Nations stories because writers inhabit what I have previously described as the "middle space" between the world as it is and as it is eventually described. From this place, writers intuit what is on our minds but not yet clearly articulated, and they use words and language to do so. (Aboriginals believe much the same thing, but put it more poetically. "We believe," said the Stó:lō Nation writer Lee Maracle, "that stories — the sacred stories, for want of a better word — are born in the space where the river meets the bank. There's a little silver eddy there, where the sun hits, and that's where the story creators live.")

This is why making knowledge of the residential schools a component of the core curriculum is — while a necessary gesture that should be implemented immediately — not in itself enough. It is also of the essence that the teaching of some sort of course in aboriginal language be a mandatory requirement for students matriculating from high school because language is the vessel to understanding a community's culture, history, specificity and world view.

What with our long experience of French- and English-speaking difference, we of all peoples of the world should understand this. And making courses of this kind compulsory would have three immediate social benefits: it would hasten "reconciliation," but also create thousands of meaningful jobs contributing to aboriginals' senses of value and participation in Canadian society, and, through more confident discussion, drive us along a better road in which less comfortable truths replace politically correct ones convenient in different ways to different parties.

Canada, remarkably, is still a place where reconciliation is eminently possible — where the rebuke and anger, for instance, that Acadians might also have felt, did not come to pass. Recently I have wondered, despairingly, if that Canada still exists. Certainly, it's hard to believe that it does when Bernard Valcourt, the aboriginal affairs minister, is able to deflect the issue of teen suicides on reserves as "first and foremost the responsibility of their parents," or when the prime minister himself insists that 1,200 missing and murdered aboriginal women "is not a sociological problem." This callousness is criminal.

In *Porcupines and China Dolls*, Alexie's character James looks to the Blue Hills and contemplates shooting himself, the effects of his residential school experience too painful to bear.

"It's like Jake is making an effort to get back to the old ways and join the old people," Alexie told me. "He's trying to get back home, wherever home is — it's a crazy way of thinking, but better to kill yourself out on the land than on some dirty back street somewhere. Out on the land it would almost be like a ritual, but it would be a tragedy in the community."

In truth, a tragedy either way.

Robert [died](#) June 10, 2014 on the Dempster Highway, of “wounds to the head.” That’s all his friends and family would say but there is little doubt why, and how, his demons won.

Noah Richler’s most recent book, What We Talk About When We Talk About War, was nominated for a Governor-General’s Award.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2015/06/13/the-hard-important-truths-of-indigenous-literature.html>

Cree musicians collaborate for album designed to revitalize language

Some songs written at Cree music workshops in Fort Smith and Hay River

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 15, 2015 6:08 AM CT Last Updated: Jun 15, 2015 1:35 PM CT



Kyle Napier, who manages the NWT Cree Language Program, says the album is important in revitalizing the language: ‘This moment right now is when we need to come together with our elders and our youth, and create these intergenerational projects’

Musicians from Fort Smith, N.W.T. were joined by both national and international artists to create an album entirely in the Cree language — just in time for National Aboriginal Day.

The 14-track album is called: Cree Songs: Howls from Gratitude — in Cree, it’s titled: Nehiyaw Nikamonak: Oyoyowin ohci Nanaskomowin.

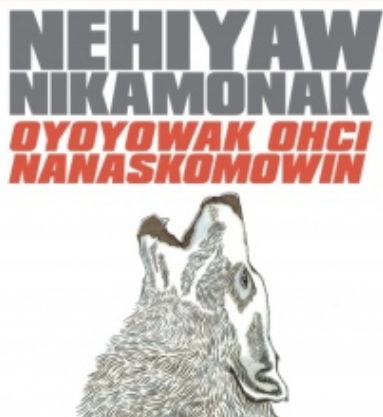
The 14-track album was produced by the NWT Cree Language Program and NWT Metis Nation, who hope the album will help those interested in Cree to learn the ☐ounselo.

“It’s groundbreaking,” says musician Veronica Johnny, who is featured on the album. “Many different people across Canada and the United States are releasing songs in our

indigenous languages. And it's just part of this resurgence that is going to get people of all nations closer to the Earth... closer to connecting with each other."

Local talent

Though the album includes contributions from established musicians like electronic group A Tribe Called Red, it also has a significant amount of Northern content.



'Howls from Gratitude,' a 14-track album, was produced by the NWT Cree Language Program and NWT Metis Nation. Kyle Napier, a member of the Metis Nation who helped produce the album, says that 'we live at the crux of indigenous language revitalization.' (<http://nehiyawewin.com/>)

As part of the album's production, the NWT Cree Language Program held two Cree music workshops in Fort Smith and Hay River. Following the workshops, A group of youth, musicians and elders brainstormed together and wrote four songs, which were recorded over three days.

The album also includes a translated lyric book.

Preserving the language

Kyle Napier is a member of the NWT Metis Nation and manages the NWT Cree Language Program.

"There is music from every genre. There's powwow-step, there's classic rock, there's folk, there's country, there's hard rock, there's hip-hop, there's traditional drumming," he says.

He calls the album an important way to preserve the language.

"Twenty years ago, there had been 75,000 reported Cree language speakers, but these days the number is around 50,000. And I am afraid that number is on a steep decline unless we take action," he says.

“We live at the crux of indigenous language revitalization. This moment right now. Is when we need to come together with our elders and our youth and create these intergenerational projects.”

‘My heart swells with pride’

Johnny, who doesn’t speak Cree fluently, says that recording the album meant a pressure to learn the language.

“Through this project, actually, I have made the most progress I ever have in learning Cree,” she says.

Johnny says she’s happy with the final mix, and that she “loves the sound of it.”

“I find the best ways to learn a language is through music,” says Johnny. “We start that in school right from the ABC’s. We do it through song. I think that using several ways to remember something is the really the key.

“The tracks that I have already heard have made me so proud. Have made my heart swell with so much pride.”

Three songs from the album are already available on the [project’s website](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/cree-musicians-collaborate-for-album-designed-to-revitalize-language-1.3113024), where the entire album will be made available for free on June 21: National Aboriginal Day.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/cree-musicians-collaborate-for-album-designed-to-revitalize-language-1.3113024>

Creating video games help indigenous girls boost self-confidence

Native women and girls are learning how to make video games at Indigicade, a Toronto program that teaches programming skills while boosting self-confidence.



Chloe Wobschall (right) said making video games is one of the easiest ways to express your ideas.

By: [Jillian Kestler-D'Amours](#) Staff Reporter, Published on Mon Jun 15 2015

Despite her cheerful exterior, Chloe Wobschall has an unusual challenge weighing on her: how can she transform the topic of mental health into a video game that people will want to play?

“Right now, I want to make a horror (game) because horror is one of my favourites. (My game) has a cute style to it, and wants to make you feel safe in your environment, until it gets progressively more creepy,” the 14-year-old said.

“But how do I make (the characters) creepy? Everything that’s in the scene, how do I turn (it) strange?”

Wobschall is one of the participants at *Indigicade*, a video game development program for Indigenous girls and women, aged 13-24, launched earlier this month in Toronto.

She told the Star that creating a game is letting her talk about something that really matters.

The technical skills will come later.

“We treat (mental health) like it’s not really that big of a deal, but it actually is. If you get a broken leg, we all care about it. But if you’re depressed, (people will just say) stop being sad,” she said.

Organized by The Indigenous Routes Collective, which promotes digital training for Indigenous youth, and Dames Making Games, a Toronto non-profit that supports women in gaming, *Indigicade* aims to empower participants to express themselves through gaming.

Five girls attended a session last Thursday at Bento Miso, a shared workspace on Richmond St., where they learned about prototyping and art design.

“I’m definitely excited,” said 14-year-old Carson Pechawis, after the group completed a timed challenge to create, test and revise two simple games on paper.

One team built a snakes-and-ladders-style course, where players use popsicle sticks to slide through holes in the paper and cross over to the other side. The other created an elaborate sewer game that proved frustratingly-impossible to beat.

“I have my whole game plan figured out,” Pechawis said, explaining that her game will follow a potato on a quest to reclaim its kingdom from an evil cherry.

“I’m just really happy this (program) is available to us.”

Workshops — from choosing the best colours and developing their characters, to making a functional game that players will enjoy — will be held twice weekly through the end of June.

The finished games will then be unveiled during the imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival in Toronto in October.

Soha Kareem, co-director of Dames Making Games, told the Star that in addition to building the young women’s confidence, she hoped the program would show them how easy video game-making can be.

“That’s something I think is crucial,” Kareem told the Star, explaining that often women think making video games is too difficult or too costly, thus keeping them out of the industry.

“We hope it gets them the confidence that they need to express their own voice . . . in a way that’s meaningful to them. Their voice is important and marginalized voices are important to all art, video games being one of them.”

Ryan Oliver heads [Pinnguaq, a Nunavut-based technology start-up](#) that makes video games and apps [in Indigenous languages](#) and delves into issues that matter to the community.

He said programs like *Indigicade* allow Indigenous youth to share their stories in an unexpected way, while providing them with important technical skills.

“It gives you a tool to express yourself in a way you couldn’t before, to genuinely put people in your shoes,” Oliver told the Star. “You can get your message across that much more effectively. You can create non-linear experiences — it’s an amazing expression tool.”

Chloe Wobschall agreed, calling video games “one of the easiest ways” to express yourself. “You just draw what you want or make what you want to see, and your ideas are actually out there now,” she said.

“I think (gaming) is another art form that I would like to pursue, and also I want to get my messages about everything (out). There’s so much bad in the world, I just want to make some good happen.”

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2015/06/15/creating-video-games-help-indigenous-girls-boost-self-confidence.html>

Law of the land: Tracey Lindberg’s debut novel, Birdie, puts Cree poetics in the spotlight

[Emily M. Keeler](#) | June 15, 2015 3:15 PM ET

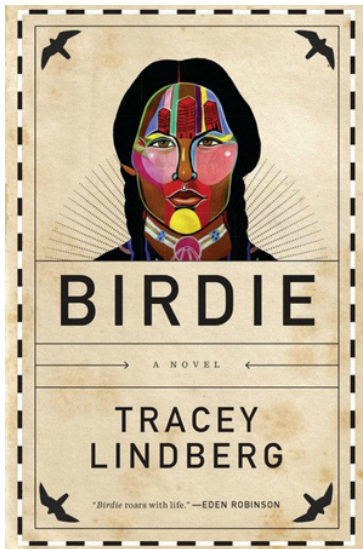


Novelist and lawyer Tracy Lindberg on the relationship-based nature of Cree law: “You don’t let your relatives get murdered or go missing.”

Dr. Tracey Lindberg bought me a bottle of water before we had even met. I stood three or four places in line behind her at the busy Toronto I where we were meeting to discuss her first novel, *Birdie*, without even knowing it. By the time I recognized her, sitting at a small table near the front, it had turned out we had more than we needed. It was the kind of minor generosity that feeds into the broader rhythms of her work.

Lindberg, a Harvard grad and professor of law at both the University of Ottawa and the center for World Indigenous Knowledge and Research at Athabasca University, where she is a Canada Research chair, has an electrifying demeanor; when she speaks, her words seem chosen with uncommon care, and her deep brown eyes, framed by chic, bold spectacles, hold mine with a hypnotic steadfastness. A citizen of Kelly Lake Cree Nation in Alberta, Lindberg’s day job also sees her working with spiritual leaders and elders from several Indigenous nations to record and translate laws for and by the community.

Birdie, her first novel, unfolds as a kind of week-long vision quest undertaken by a young Cree woman, Bernice, who retreats into herself in order to reconcile both her own personal history and the larger historical forces at play with her continued existence.



All people, Lindberg says, are still reeling from what she calls the colonial bomb. “The bomb,” she elaborates, “somebody referred to residential schools as the bomb that went off in your community. I think that colonization is a bomb, and now that that bomb’s gone off, Bernice, as a protagonist — she’s sort of somewhere back here, but her great grandmother was hit first.” In *Birdie*, as in life, Bernice and other Aboriginal people are not alone with having to contend with the aftermath of “counselor” and historical trauma. In the book, Bernice lives in an apartment above a bakery, where she is employed by a white woman named Lola. Lindberg says that Lola, too, is affected by the aftermath of the bomb, and this is borne out in the novel. Lindberg weaves Cree poetic aesthetics throughout the novel, and bits of the language and of humorous fables and stories bubble up. In some scenes, Lola is seen to have sublimated parts of Cree culture, humming traditional songs or suddenly being able to say something to Birdie in the language. Because of the trippy way the story unspools, and given Bernice’s troubling experiences, it’s occasionally not clear which parts of the story take place in a dreamscape and which in waking life. Bernice’s memories rise toward the narrative’s surface, but nothing quite breaks through. It’s memories all the way down.

Cree law, Lindberg says, is relational — one very important tenet is that all human beings treat each other like relatives, that we have a reciprocal obligation to take care of one another as if we were universally bound by family ties. When she brought water for me to drink during our conversation, she was taking care of me, a woman she’d never met.

“The law to Cree peoples is well known in many corners, and it’s called the Wahkohtowin,” she explains, helpfully spelling the term out in our shared alphabet. The novel, she explains, was an important way to explore Wahkohtowin from an intimate, human-scale perspective. “I didn’t intend to say, ‘Let’s look at what Cree law looks like,’ and write that down — if I did, I’d write the Cree criminal code — but to piece it

together,” she says. “What do reciprocal obligations look like? What happens when they’re broken, and how do you rebuild? Well, that is a narrative.”

Narrative, it turns out, is an effective way of continuing the kind of work Lindberg does in her professorial capacities. “A lot of the conversations that I have, day to day, as an academic, or that I had as a full-time lawyer, are sort of like little tiny stories,” she says, “and you get to tell the little tiny stories between a select or privileged audience — so, a judge, or a classroom of people who have paid you to be there. You also have all the space in the world to put your arguments and time together beforehand.”

‘What I hope that the book does — that good stuff — is to humanize us, humanize indigenous woman, indigenous girls, so that, in a way, we’re thought of as relatives. Because you care about your relatives’

A work of fiction, by contrast, is another kind of story, one that requires an unknowable audience who are likely to interpret the story in personal, unique ways. “You can be very directive as a lawyer and very directive as a professor, and the goals that are achieved are most often your own,” Lindberg says, whereas with a novel, you must “let go of your control, in a certain way, because an audience decides for themselves what it means for them.”

“The reason that I wrote this novel, rather than write it as an academic article,” she says, “is that I’ve seen, along the way, it’s really quite easy to make decisions in law about indigenous people as a category. It’s really easy to lecture about indigenous peoples if it’s a topic.” The problem, of course, is that one doesn’t experience the world as a category; neither can we empathetically experience each other as topics.

Bernice is a fictional character, but her wry observations about the world, and her enduring adoration for a certain character on the *The Beachcombers* paints her as fully realized. Her relationships with the women in her life — her distant mother, her promiscuous auntie Val, her hard-bodied boss, Lola, her nervous chatterer of a cousin, Skinny Freeda — give shape to her life; her relationships, even where they break down, illustrate how important keeping Wahkohtowin is in the age of cheezies and OutKast, just as in the ancient past. She’s a contemporary hero, smart and funny even as she reaches her breaking point, and through Lindberg’s thorough imagining of her, she becomes easy to know, even to love.

“It’s really difficult to dismiss or dehumanize indigenous peoples if it’s a person,” Lindberg says. “So what I hope that the book does — that good stuff — is to humanize us, humanize indigenous woman, indigenous girls, so that, in a way, we’re thought of as relatives. Because you care about your relatives,” she says. “You don’t let your relatives get murdered or go missing.”

- * *

Emily M. Keeler is the newspaper’s books editor.

Direct Link: <http://news.nationalpost.com/arts/books/law-of-the-land-tracy-lindbergs-debut-novel-birdie-puts-cree-poetics-in-the-spotlight>

Cree filmmaker fights to keep Weengushk Film Institute open

Shirley Cheechoo says film school helps youth deal with troubled past

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 17, 2015 5:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jun 17, 2015 5:00 AM ET



The Weengushk Film Institute teaches aboriginal youth much more than how to make a film, according to founder Shirley Cheechoo. (CBC)

Filmmaker, actor, and director Shirley Cheechoo, known for her films *Johnny Tootall* and *Moose River Crossing*, has turned to online fundraising to keep her Weengushk Film Institute afloat after being turned down by band offices and government.

For Cheechoo, the institute on Manitoulin Island, Ont., teaches aboriginal youth much more than how to make a film.



Shirley Cheechoo says 80 per cent of the students enrolled at the Weengushk Film Institute either continue in the film industry or go back to school. (Supplied)

“They write about their experiences. And it heals them because they get it out.”

Cheechoo says she has seen many troubled youth turn their lives around after studying at the non-profit training institute.

“While they are making a film, they are learning how to read, write, do math, leadership, how to do their resumes, and how to work as a team,” Cheechoo says. “So they can move from where they are to a better life, and a better future.”

Cheechoo says 80 per cent of the students enrolled at the institute either continue in the film industry or go back to school.

Cheechoo sent 600 letters to band councils across the country asking for \$250 each annually and only got three responses. She says bands don’t want to fund the Weegushk Film Institute because it doesn’t give out official certification.

But for Cheechoo, what the school offers is much more than a diploma.

“One student came to our school. He was angry, very angry. And he was throwing chairs, and having fits and going out and burning himself in the arm,” Cheechoo says. “You’d never know that was that same kid now when you see him”.

Cheechoo is currently crowdfunding to help cover the costs of rent, electricity and internet at the institute.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/cree-filmmaker-fights-to-keep-weegushk-film-institute-open-1.3115825>

Aboriginal Cultural Festival celebrates Vancouver Island First Nations

posted Jun 16, 2015 at 10:00 AM

A multi-day festival highlighting aboriginal culture kicks off this Friday at the Royal B.C. Museum in celebration of National Aboriginal Day.

The 2015 Aboriginal Cultural Festival celebrates Vancouver Island’s three First Nations communities: the Coast Salish First Nations and the Nuw-Chah-Nulth and Kwakwaka’wakw First Nations.

As part of the free three-day event, there will be performances by more than 45 performers, including Lekwungen Traditional Dancers, the Esquimalt Singers & Dancers, Le-La-La Dancers from Kwakwaka’wakw Nation, Tzinquaw Dancers and three-time world hoop dancer champion Alex Wells.

There will also be an artist market featuring authentic indigenous arts and crafts, wood carving and drum-making demonstrations, authentic Aboriginal cuisine and storytelling.

This is the second year the festival will be put on outside the museum and organizers are expecting to draw more than 10,000 people over the weekend.

“[Participants] are going to experience the diverse cultures that B.C. has to offer,” said Paula Amos, director of operations and partnerships with Aboriginal Tourism B.C., who organized the event.

“It’s a day for us to celebrate who we are, the diversity of our cultures, the resilience of our cultures that comes from our history and how we’re still here strong, and passing on our culture to the next generations.”

According to Keith Henry, CEO of Aboriginal Tourism B.C., this weekend is the perfect opportunity to celebrate their culture.

“There’s never been a more important time to celebrate National Aboriginal Day in light of the recent Truth and Reconciliation recommendations. I think this is the day where British Columbians and Canadians can really get out and learn a little more about the true history and stories of the land that we all live on in Canada today,” said Henry.

Earlier this month, the federal Truth and Reconciliation Commission released a report calling the treatment of First Nations children at residential schools a “cultural genocide,” and included 94 recommendations, such as launching a national inquiry to investigate the violence and its relationship to the “intergenerational legacy of residential schools.”

The festival will kick off this Friday (June 19) at 11 a.m. outside the Royal B.C. Museum. For more information on events, visit aboriginalbc.com.

Direct Link: <http://www.vicnews.com/news/307624511.html>

Manitoba government kicks off early National Aboriginal Day celebrations

Provincial government also marks 25th anniversary of Elijah Harper's stand on Meech Lake Accord

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 16, 2015 12:49 PM CT Last Updated: Jun 16, 2015 2:53 PM CT



Members of the Spirit Sands Drum Group perform at a National Aboriginal Day celebration outside the Manitoba legislature on Tuesday. (CBC)

The Manitoba government celebrated National Aboriginal Day early with an event outside the provincial legislature today.



Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Minister Eric Robinson (standing on stage) hosted the National Aboriginal Day event on Tuesday. He was joined by Attorney-General Gord Mackintosh, left, former AFN national chief Phil Fontaine and Holly and Bruce Harper, the children of Elijah Harper. (Pierre Verrière/Radio-Canada)

Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Minister Eric Robinson hosted the noon-hour celebration on Tuesday, which included performances by the Spirit Sands Drum Group and the country group C-Weed Band.

Premier Greg Selinger, Attorney General Gord Mackintosh and former AFN national chief Phil Fontaine were among the dignitaries who spoke at the event.

Robinson said in addition to marking National Aboriginal Day, which will take place Sunday, the event coincides with the 25th anniversary of the debate over the Meech Lake Accord.

In June 1990, Elijah Harper — who at the time was the only aboriginal MLA in Manitoba — rose in the provincial legislature and blocked support of the accord, which ultimately collapsed.

"His actions marked a new era of indigenous leadership. It was soon after that historic moment when First Nation, Inuit, and Métis people took their rightful spot on the national stage of politics," Robinson said in a news release.

"All Manitobans are welcome to attend today's festivities where they can see, enjoy and celebrate indigenous culture."

June 21 was proclaimed as National Aboriginal Day by then-governor general Roméo Leblanc in 1996.

Robinson said while most Canada jurisdictions don't recognize Aboriginal Day as a statutory holiday — it's a holiday only in the Northwest Territories — it's a time for all Canadians to celebrate the heritage, cultures, achievements and contributions of Aboriginal Peoples.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-government-kicks-off-early-national-aboriginal-day-celebrations-1.3115841>

Aboriginal Day Live kicks off Saturday at Louise McKinney park

Edmonton Journal June 18, 2015



The crowd celebrates at Aboriginal Day Live 2014.

The APTN Aboriginal Day Live celebration takes place Saturday in Edmonton's Louise McKinney Riverfront park, shining a spotlight on aboriginal cultures.

First Nations, Inuit and Métis performers from across Alberta will take turns shining a spotlight on their unique cultures. A pop-up market of hand-selected aboriginal creatives and locally sourced food trucks and vendors will be on-site.

Join the conversation on Twitter or Instagram by tagging your posts with #ADL2015. Noteworthy posts that honour the celebration and its happenings could be added to the live broadcast.

DAYTIME CELEBRATIONS

12 -5 p.m.: Free and fun activities for the whole family. Music, dance and interactive performances, food sampling, children's activities, traditional demonstrations and storytelling at the Tipi Village presented by Poundmaker's Lodge, a sports area hosted by United Cycle and much more!

CULTURAL STAGE

12 — 5 p.m., lower level, Louise McKinney Riverfront Park: First Nations, Inuit and Métis performers will take turns shining a spotlight on their unique cultures, from jiggling to hoop dancing to throat singing to drumming and fiddling.

Cultural Stage Hosts: CFWE-FM radio personalities Wally Desjarlais, Arlysse Wuttunee and Jeremy Harpe.

SCHEDULE

12 p.m.: Treaty Six Opening Ceremony, Grand Chief Bernice Martial of the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations; Elder John Ermineskin, Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations; Northern Cree Drummers; and EJSH Dance Troupe.

12:40 p.m.: Métis Child & Family Services Youth Jiggers, accompanied by Métis fiddler Alfie Myhre and Métis guitarist Byron Myhre

1 p.m.: Kelsey Wolver, hoop dancer

1:20 p.m.: Jenna Broomfield, Inuit throat singer

1:40 p.m.: Jessie Marie Gibney, Métis opera singer

2 p.m.: Nakita Kohan, singer-songwriter

2:20 p.m.: Dialogue of Drum and Dance — Interactive Performance, Africa Centre, Native Counselling Services Alberta, and REACH Edmonton

3 p.m.: Sherryl Sewepagaham Trio, dynamic combination of traditional voice and drum with jazz piano and Latin percussion

3:40 p.m.: Amanda Woodward-Lamothe, flautist

4 p.m.: Jenna Broomfield, Inuit throat singer

4:20 p.m.: Jessie Marie Gibney, Métis opera singer

4:40 p.m.: Kelsey Wolver, hoop dancer

TIPI VILLAGE

12 — 5 p.m., Lower Level, Louise McKinney Riverfront Park. Stunning First Nation tipis will transform Louise McKinney Riverfront Park into a cultural experience reflective of the region. Be sure to partake in the storytelling, singing, drumming, artisan demonstrations, and all sorts of fun activities and games, presented by Poundmaker's Lodge.

Tipis 1 — 3: Storytelling (Indigenous Legends, Teachings)

Tipis 4 — 5: Crafts/Artisan Demonstrations

Treaty Six representatives will bring a village of activities to the site which will introduce the rich heritage of the region.

United Cycle will host a sports area raising the energy on-site.

FOOD VENDORS

About a dozen food vendors will be on-site. Vendors serving up aboriginal-themed menu items include: Soner's Donair (bannock chicken burger); Battista's Calzone Company (Saskatoon berries and bison sausages); Blue Giraffe Creamery (wild blueberry ice cream); and So Cal Smoothies (blueberry smoothie).

FREE LIVE EVENING TWIN STAGE CONCERT

6:30 — 10:30 p.m.: The Aboriginal Day Live concert stage at the Louise McKinney Riverfront Park will burst with the sounds of Crystal Shawanda, Derek Miller, George Canyon, Ghostkeeper, Leanne Goose, Murray Porter, Nathan Cunningham, Northern Cree Singers, and Prince Charles Elementary Fiddlers.

Fireworks: 10:30 p.m.

ARTISTS

Crystal Shawanda: At the age of 12, Shawanda visited Nashville with her truck driver father and was forever changed. Four albums, multiple top chart hits, a permanent gig at Tootsie's Orchid Lounge on Nashville's world-famous Broadway and a Juno later, this

country gal from Wikwemikong First Nation on Canada's Manitoulin Island now calls Tennessee's capital city her home. Immersed in the music of her heritage and dreams as a child, she's now developed a deep sounding roots, blues and Americana style of her own.

Derek Miller: Miller is from the Six Nations of the Grand River in Ontario and is a singer-songwriter. His esthetics of roots -inflected and soul-stirring rock 'n' roll will animate the stage. His latest release, Derek Miller with Double Trouble, is a mix of soul, blues and country.

George Canyon: At his core Canyon is Nova Scotian, but now resides in Alberta. He's a country singer-songwriter, actor, national spokesperson for diabetes and a philanthropist. From competing on Nashville Star to being appointed the first Colonel Commandant of the Royal Canadian Air Cadets, he's swiftly risen to the top. George has also amassed multiple awards — including Junos and a Canadian Country Music Award for Humanitarian of the Year.

Ghostkeeper: From Calgary, Ghostkeeper is a foursome led by Shane Ghostkeeper and Sarah Houle. Both grew up among the isolated landscapes of northern Alberta listening to folk and blues records. The duo then grew to a foursome with the addition of Jay Crocker and Scott Munro that expanded their horizons to explore pop sounds. Traditional storytelling influences are at the core of their lyrics that are layered with noisy blues and a catchy pop sensibility.

Leanne Goose: Arising from the heart of Mackenzie Delta is Leanne Goose. Her Inuvialuit and Dene roots add to the core of her country, blues and inflections of the guitar. Leanne's lyrics originate from the North, a region of long nights and days of little light.

Murray Porter: He is a Mohawk master of the piano from the Six Nations of the Grand River, and has shaped his own style of blues, country and humour. Murray's latest album, Songs Lived & Life Played, won him a 2012 Juno Award for Aboriginal Album of the Year.

Nathan Cunningham: Originally from Sucker Creek First Nation in northern Alberta, Cunningham is a country singer who blends his inspiration from many genres but stays true to his calling of the country sound. Cunningham's release, Road Renditions, perked up ears in 2013 when he claimed Best Country CD and Male Entertainer of the Year at the Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music Awards.

Northern Cree Singers: Northern Cree Singers is comprised of members from throughout the Treaty 6 regions and has released more than 30 albums. Their drumming and singing are highly honoured in the powwow world, and their work is found on the soundtrack for the Hollywood blockbuster Grey Owl. The only Canadian aboriginal group to be nominated many times over for Grammy Awards.

Prince Charles Elementary Fiddlers: Fifteen fiddle players from Prince Charles School perform covers of classic hits that span decades, including the genres of country, rock and jig.

Edmonton co-hosts

Michelle Thrush: Thrush is an accomplished actor and continuously gives back to her community. Her achievements include 2012 and 2014 Alberta Media Production Industries Awards for Best Performance by an Alberta Actress and she was appointed 2012 Alberta Aboriginal Role Model of the Year. Many know Michelle for her portrayal of Gail Stoney from the award-winning APTN dramatic series, Blackstone. In 2011, she was awarded a Gemini Award (now the Canadian Screen Awards) for Best Performance by an Actress in a Continuing Leading Dramatic Role. Her latest project is Making Treaty 7 Don.

Don Kelly: Kelly hails from the Ojibways of Onigaming First Nation in northwestern Ontario. As a host, comedian and performer, he has also starred in his own national television specials on CBC's Comics! and CTV's Comedy Now. He's also known for his hit series Fish Out of Water on APTN, which has earned him Gemini Awards (now the Canadian Screen Awards) nominations as host and writer.

Direct Link:

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Aboriginal+Live+kicks+Saturday+Louise+McKinney+park/11144388/story.html>

Métis culture celebrated at Midland school



MIDLAND – Students made bannock, tasted smoked fish, learned to jig and practised weaving during an event celebrating Métis culture at Huron Park Public School on Tuesday.

Showing off some of the items they learned about during the Metis Rendezvous are, clockwise from left: Michael Poole, Sarah Robitaille, Aaron Zurawski, Callum Perrault, Rory Armstrong, Amelia Perrault and Abby Goneau.

A full day of 12 activities was planned for students from Huron Park, Bayview and Mundy's Bay public schools, and James Keating and Victoria Harbour elementary schools.

Direct Link: <http://www.simcoe.com/community-story/5680338-m-tis-culture-celebrated-at-midland-school/>

Local artist merges his European and Native heritage through his art

Tuesday, Jun 16, 2015 06:00 am

By: [Barry Kerton](#)



Travis Ladouceur stands beside a painting called Sundance For You. It is a painting he did to honour his brother who recently passed away.

Travis Ladouceur has come a long way in a short time. Even since the last time the Barrhead Leader talked to the Barrhead based artist.

In mid April the Leader visited Ladouceur at the Barrhead Public Library where he had a number of his paintings on display.

“Right now I am undergoing somewhat of a transformation when it comes to my art,” he said, adding that the art style that now interests him the most is art deco. “I think it is a good match for my style.”

For the last four years Ladouceur has concentrated his efforts in creating Native themed art, in large part in to pay homage to his Metis heritage.

He said about a month ago he started reading and investigating art deco, saying that it really spoke to him as an artist.

“I think as a Metis I have always been trying to match my native side with my French heritage. That is why my art really doesn’t look like traditional native art. You can see its influence in my work, but it isn’t really native art, it is a style of my own,” Ladouceur said, adding that the art deco style is another attempt to bring together his native and European heritages.

Ladouceur noted that while he is still learning to integrate the two styles into his work, he believes people will notice the difference.

“I think my native art, especially my earlier pieces were sloppy, but now with the art deco influence, my work is more structured,” he said. “You can see (pointing to one of his pieces) how my lines are more rigid and straight.”

However, this is not the first time Ladouceur’s art has undergone a transformation. As a young man growing up in Edmonton the first painting he did, outside his one and only art class in Grade 10, was graffiti. And not the legal graffiti painting on walls provided by the community.

“I did a lot of sneaking around trying to find places to ply my trade,” he said, adding that he still has a love for graffiti. “It’s my first love and I think it will always be a big influence on my art.”

It was desperation that helped Ladouceur transition from a graffiti artist to one more socially acceptable and profitable. In 2010, Ladouceur said he was down to his last \$20 when he decided to use his artistic skills to earn some extra money. Using a scrap piece of wood he found in an alley and paints he bought at the dollar store he painted his first painting and received \$100 for the painting.

“That was the start of me really becoming an artist,” he said.

The first thing Ladouceur did after selling the painting was to join the Westlock Community Art Club. The membership cost \$20. He then invested the remaining profit in buying more supplies and along with some old canvases he borrowed from his former art teacher in Barrhead, he had his first art show in Westlock.

“I really had to paint my butt off. To have an art show I had to have 10 paintings in a very short period of time,” he remembered, adding that he sold eight of those paintings during his first show.

From then on, he said he went on to have a number of showings at the Westlock Community Art Club becoming its most sold artist.

Most of the time Ladouceur said he has no problem finding subjects to paint about, they usually come right out of the top of his head, but sometimes he finds inspiration from what is happening in his life.

Recently, Ladouceur's brother passed away and he used his pain as part of the healing process.

"My brother was planning to go to a Sundance this summer and unfortunately he won't get that chance, so I painted this (pointing to the large painting in the centre of the Barrhead Art Club's display) in commemoration of him. The painting is called Sundance for You," he said adding that he is also thinking of attending a Sundance as a way to continue the healing process.

When Ladouceur isn't painting, he said the majority of his time is spent networking and getting his name and artwork out to the public. To be a successful artist he said, not only does a person have to have talent and dedication, but be part businessperson as well.

"About 60 per cent of my time is spent on Facebook, Deviantart.com to make sure people know who I am and what my paintings look like," he said. "I know a lot of artists, including one I am mentoring in Michigan, who have as much or even more talent as I do, but have never sold a painting."

If anyone is interested in seeing or buying one of Ladouceur's paintings they can visit the Barrhead Art Club on Mondays and Fridays from noon to 4 p.m. You can also check out his work through his Facebook page Travis Ladouceur Art or through DeviantArt.com.

Direct Link: <http://www.barrheadleader.com/article/20150616/BAR0801/306169992/-1/bar/local-artist-merges-his-european-and-native-heritage-through-his-art>

Barrie Native Friendship Centre pow wow expands to welcome French, Metis



The annual pow wow at Springwater Park is this weekend. Ernestine Baldwin, left, is a nookmis (Elder) at the Barrie Native Friendship Centre while Wendy Clark, right, is president.
Barrie Advance

By [Laurie Watt](#), Jun 12, 2015

SIDEBAR

The 26th annual Pow Wow

Where: Springwater Provincial Park

When: Saturday and Sunday, noon and 7 p.m. each day. Cost: \$5 per person.

Other activities throughout the weekend include:

- Simcoe County Museum: individual and group sports and games
- Conseil scolaire Viamonde presents French dances
- 5 p.m. daily: The Louis LaFaive Family will perform Métis music and dance
- Métis stories, crafts and dances

Wendy Clark will share what she has discovered about her heritage at this weekend's Barrie Native Friendship Centre Pow Wow and Rendezvous.

The 51-year-old Barrie woman is a jingle dress dancer.

"Something told me I had to be a jingle dress dancer," said the Oneida First Nation woman, who never really knew much about her family's culture because she was raised off-reserve in London.

In those days, there were two very different worlds for First Nations children, explained BNFC executive director Gary Sutherland. Those raised in cities never learned about their heritage and traditions while those on reserves often rejected their city cousins as white when they would visit.

Having moved to the Barrie area, which is traditional Ojibway territory, 25 years ago, Clark connected with the Barrie Native Friendship Centre and began to learn more about First Nations traditions and different ways of life.

But that later-in-life discovery meant that, as a young girl, she never aspired to be a traditional dancer, the same way girls in other cultures learn their traditional dances.

It was only two years ago she felt a calling to be a healing dancer. It became a choice between a jingle dress dancer and a fancy shawl dancer.

She chose the jingle dress and has been making her regalia ever since. It's still a work in progress as she adds beadwork and jingles.

Pow wows were the only way many adults such as Clark learned about their heritage, said Sutherland.

“It helps to heal. You have a sense of pride when you hear the drums and see the dancers,” said Sutherland.

This year’s theme is Wiidookdaadiwin, which means working together and helping one another.

“I was brought up a Catholic,” said BNFC elder Ernestine Baldwin, who has been to every one of the 25 local pow wows. It’s where she’s learned a lot about her heritage, although once her children were grown, she went to university to discover more.

This year’s event is more special, because it is expanding its cultural reach.

“It’s a pow wow and rendezvous. We applied for and received a grant from Ontario 400th Celebrations program that allowed us to double our efforts to make this pow wow a celebration of the three cultures — the Ojibwa and other First Nations, the French on their arrival 400 years ago with Samuel de Champlain, and the love children, the Metis,” said Mary Louise Meiers, the event’s communications co-ordinator.

“It’s a special coming together time. We’re reaching out to other cultures in our area.”

Direct Link: <http://www.simcoe.com/news-story/5671410-barrie-native-friendship-centre-pow-wow-expands-to-welcome-french-metis/>

Treaty 4 art project unveiled in Regina | Video

By Terrence meachern, Leader-Post June 12, 2015

REGINA — When Campbell Collegiate teacher Leia Laing first saw the bright, colourful finished artwork project comprised of 256 individual pieces, she almost cried.

“After seeing the students work on it all day and then finally seeing it, literally, piece by piece coming together, it was very moving,” Laing said at Thursday’s unveiling of the artwork at Campbell.

The artwork was part of the Treaty 4 — The Next Generation project developed by Laing, a French and visual arts teacher and her colleague Naomi Fortier-Frecon, who teaches language arts and social studies.

The project involved the collaborative artwork as well as a two-day conference in April at the First Nations University of Canada in Regina. The motivation for the project was to provide a different way to teach Treaty rights.

The artwork involved contributions by 250 Grades 9-12 students at Campbell, Martin, Scott and Balfour collegiates as well as teachers and guest participants

Emerald Maze, a 16-year-old Campbell student, painted a teepee with a medicine wheel.

“I liked how we were working as a group and everyone was collaborating and made one big kind of family working on this,” she said.

Max Berg, 14, worked with a two of his friends on a piece that shows the Metis flag.

“We’re all treaty people and it made us feel good that we got to make a Metis flag,” said Berg, also a student at Campbell.

Berg admitted he isn’t that good at art, but was impressed with how the project turned out. He especially enjoyed working with artist Ray Keighley.

Laing and Fortier-Frecon hope to do the project again next year.

“This has really been one of the most worthwhile things that I’ve done in my teaching career so far,” said Laing.

“We would love to ... I don’t want to stop,” added Fortier-Frecon.

Direct Link:

<http://www.leaderpost.com/entertainment/Treaty+project+unveiled+Regina+Video/11129155/story.html>

Aboriginal Business & Finance

B.C. court orders band counselor to repay unauthorized bonuses

JUSTINE HUNTER

VICTORIA — The Globe and Mail

Published Monday, Jun. 15, 2015 9:23PM EDT

Last updated Monday, Jun. 15, 2015 9:28PM EDT

Even small Indian Act bands must meet a high standard for managing money on behalf of their communities, the B.C. Court of Appeal has ruled in ordering a group of band councilors to repay bonuses they granted themselves without consulting their membership.

Five members of the Lower Kootenay Band council must return a total of \$25,000 to their community after a unanimous judgment written by Madam Justice Mary Newbury.

The June 3 decision underscores the need for elected band councils to ensure transparency and accountability. It has drawn attention in aboriginal law circles – particularly in British Columbia, where the provincial government has made economic-development deals with aboriginal bands a priority, with some communities in line for billion-dollar settlements if liquefied natural gas projects are built on the West Coast.

“This gives individual band members a powerful authority to call their band councils to account for their money. They have a fiduciary duty to manage these communally owned assets,” said lawyer Mary Macaulay, who represented band member Wayne Louie in his civil suit challenging the payments.

“The issue is that band councils do not treat these monies when they come in as their own ATM to pay themselves – which is exactly what they did in this case.”

The Lower Kootenay Band, with only 220 members, received a one-time payment of \$125,000 in 2009 from the local regional district as compensation for a road that cuts through the reserve. Five members of the band council at that time met in camera and agreed that they should each receive a \$5,000 “retroactive honorarium” out of that money.

The band had no formal rules governing how the payment from the district should be spent. The five defendants, including current Chief Jason Louie, argued in court that they had followed the customs of previous councils and that they were acting in the best interests of the band.

Justice Newbury dismissed their defence: “The defendants profited personally from their position as councilors without express authority to do so. ... The conclusion seems to me inescapable that this was a breach of fiduciary duty, even in the context of a relatively informal and custom-based governance structure.”

Wayne Louie said he pursued the case because of concerns of “bad governance” that he said has led to inequity in the community. There are roughly 100 members living on the reserve near Creston. “We have one side of the community living on the high end, and the other side go to food banks,” he said.

Under federal law, Indian Act band councils have the authority to manage their communities’ incomes, but their actions require the consent of a majority of their

constituents. The court found no evidence that the Lower Kootenay Band council obtained such consent.

“While I agree that it is unrealistic to expect a band to comply strictly with all the rules and regulations of a sophisticated corporation or council, I see no basis on which this very fundamental statutory provision could be effectively ignored,” Justice Newbury wrote.

In recent years, the B.C. government has sought to achieve reconciliation with First Nations through economic-development deals with Indian Act bands. It has signed hundreds of revenue-sharing deals involving forestry and other forms of resource development. In the past two fiscal years, those payments have exceeded \$78-million.

Those deals pale in comparison with the potential for LNG revenue-sharing pacts. One band, the Lax Kw’alaams, last month rejected a \$1.2-billion offer to consent to the proposed Pacific NorthWest LNG plant, but other First Nations have signed similar agreements.

Cheryl Casimer of the First Nations Summit said the appeal court decision should spur band councils to make sure they have the proper legal mechanisms in place to conduct business for their communities.

“It’s fortunate that it happened because it puts everyone on notice. If there are communities operating in the old realm of making decisions without involving your membership, it’s an eye-opener,” she said. “Band governments have to ensure they have the proper measures in place.”

The Lower Kootenay Band council has 30 days to seek leave to appeal the decision. Officials did not return calls on Monday.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/bc-court-orders-band-councillors-to-repay-unauthorized-bonuses/article24973207/>

Aboriginal Community Development

Terrace residents ask for aboriginal equality

by [Cecile Favron – Terrace Standard](#)

posted Jun 12, 2015 at 6:00 AM— updated Jun 13, 2015 at 3:50 PM



NOELLE Bulleid posts a letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper June 11, asking him to improve the lives of aboriginal children.

OUR Dreams Matter Too, a national walk and letter writing event for aboriginal equality, was held June 11 at George Little Park.

Representatives from the Northwest Social Workers Branch, Knox United Church, Kermode Friendship Centre and other local organizations walked from the park to mail letters to Prime Minister Stephen Harper asking that he do more to help First Nations children.

Organizer Robert Hart of the Northwest Social Workers Branch explained that this is the fourth annual event in Terrace and across the country organized by the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada.

“What we are doing is writing to Prime Minister Stephen Harper to remind him that, even though he apologized on behalf of Canada for residential schools, he never really did too much about that,” Hart explained, citing small budgets for social services.

Harper authorized residential school cash settlements, Hart said, but he didn’t recognize that settlements don’t nearly address the social damage that was done by residential schools nor the social work that has to be done.

“If Harper is going to apologize, he needs to make a social investment in [aboriginal] children,” Hart asserted.

The caring society is a national agency that is working with First Nations people to re-assert their rights and create a healthy home, education, and cultural environment. The society promoted more than 31 “Our Dreams Matter Too” walks across the country last year.

Hart's social services experience has made him especially sensitive to the injustices he believes that the First Nations people are continuing to suffer under the Canadian government.

"To be quite honest, we have been blatantly racist," Hart said. "The Department of Indian Affairs simply underfunds everything. Kids in B.C. do comparably well because they go to public school, but in other areas of the country where there are isolated reserves [the department] is not funding them well."

His connection to the cause came through Cindy Blackstock, the executive director of the caring society, a local woman of Gitksan background. This prompted him to organize the walk and letter-sending event in Terrace for each of the past four years.

Hart said that he is not going to stop organizing the event in Terrace until substantial and long-term action is taken by the Canadian government to help aboriginal children.

"This is not something that we should tolerate in Canada," Hart contended. "We will continue until the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are followed and until aboriginal kids have the same kind of opportunity as any other Canadian kid."

Direct Link: <http://www.terracestandard.com/news/307115771.html>

Lytton 1,300-hectare wildfire forces evacuation of some homes

10 homes under evacuation order, another 65 on evacuation alert

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 11, 2015 1:57 PM PT Last Updated: Jun 11, 2015 10:44 PM PT

The Lytton First Nations Band has issued an evacuation order for 10 homes and an alert for another 65 properties because of a fast-growing wildfire [south of Lytton, B.C.](#)

The B.C. Wildfire Management Branch says strong winds gusting up to 80 km/h are driving the 1,300-hectare blaze, which is burning up a steep hillside on the west side of the Fraser river, roughly 100 kilometres north of Hope.

Fire information officer Melissa Klassen says the fire was first reported around noon and has grown rapidly in size. Klassen says the fire is roughly 10 kilometres south of Lytton and moving north.

Fire is 'engulfing everything'

A reception Centre has been set up at the Parish Hall in Lytton to assist affected residents.

“We are seeing aggressive, high fire behaviour. It is a crown fire which means that it is engulfing everything that it comes in contact with,” says Klassen. “It’s ☐ounselor from those tree tops.”



The wildfire in Lytton has grown to 1,500 hectares overnight. (B.C. Wildfire Management Branch)

The wildfire management branch has 22 firefighters on scene, with another 20 on the way, and is responding with the support of air tankers and helicopters.

The high winds are a challenge for firefighters, says Klassen. However, the strong winds that challenged crews earlier on Thursday are expected to lessen overnight.

The fire is also generating a lot of smoke and the winds are carrying the smoke throughout the Kamloops region and can be seen from Merritt and Vernon.

As of 10 p.m. PT, it was not contained at all.

Trees ‘whipping up in flame’

Barry Shantz, who lives three ☐ounselor☐ south of Lytton, says he’s been watching the fire from his home across the river.

“Sometimes we can see trees just going from the bottom to the top, just whipping up in flame.”

Gerry Giesbrecht says he could see smoke billowing up into the air from several ☐ounselor☐ away as he drove through the area.

“The most powerful plume of smoke I have ever seen. Like a volcano, thick.”

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/lytton-1-300-hectare-wildfire-forces-evacuation-of-some-homes-1.3110071>

Prince George counselor wants to acknowledge First Nations history by renaming civic park

The Lheidli T'enneh village was burned down in 1913

By Daybreak North, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 14, 2015 9:35 AM PT Last Updated: Jun 16, 2015 8:42 AM PT



Prince George City Councillor Murry Krause is proposing renaming Fort George Park to Lheidli T'enneh Memorial Park to acknowledge how the First Nations community was forcibly removed from their land. (Province of B.C./Flickr)

The City of Prince George could be renaming its main civic park to recognize a troubled past with a local First Nations community.

City Councillor Murry Krause is recommending Fort George Park be renamed Lheidli T'enneh Memorial Park.

In a memo to council, Krause wrote:

“The renaming of Fort George Park to Lheidli T'enneh Memorial Park commemorates, in a respectful way, a troubling time in our city's history when Lheidli T'enneh people were forcibly removed from their land.

“The inclusion of the word memorial in the proposed name change acknowledges the presence of the Lheidli T'enneh Burial Grounds in the park. The cemetery is all that remains of the village that was destroyed in 1913.”

The Lheidli T'enneh village at the confluence of the Nechako and Fraser rivers was burned in 1913 in order to make way for the city and railway.

Band members were moved to a reserve best-known as Shelley. According to Lheidli band member and former counselor Rena Zatorski, that move is still considered a forced relocation.

The proposed renaming has the support of Lheidli Chief Dominic Frederick.

Opposition to name change

However, not all residents are enthusiastic about the name change and have voices their concerns on social media.

“Keep the name Fort George Park, perhaps another larger marker on the old cemetery grounds,” Joan Wes Clarke wrote on CBC Daybreak North’s Facebook page.

“I grew up in Prince George and it has been Fort George Park forever. I am not sure why the reason for the change of name. I do like the name, but leave out ‘memorial’,” wrote Tammy Wood.

Prince George city council will vote on the proposal on Monday.

If approved, the renaming would happen on June 21 — National Aboriginal Day.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/prince-george-councillor-wants-to-acknowledge-first-nations-history-by-renaming-civic-park-1.3111749>

‘Om the Bridge’ was nothing more than a publicity stunt: political analyst

by [Shannon Brennan](#)

Posted Jun 13, 2015 11:39 am PDT

Last Updated Jun 13, 2015 at 12:03 pm PDT



VANCOUVER (NEWS 1130) – The premier has pulled the plug on a mass yoga class she had hoped to hold on the Burrard Bridge after negative feedback from the public.

[Om the Bridge] was always a publicity stunt and photo op for the premier says Omni TV’s political analyst in Victoria Kim Emerson. “It was an ill thought out thing from the beginning, if they really wanted to have a genuine celebration of yoga on International Yoga Day they could have done as the City of Vancouver had suggested and held it in a park. If they still had wanted to do it after they cancelled this they still could have moved it into a park.”

Emerson notes it was a political issue. “What it became was a flash point for everyone who doesn’t like something about the government is doing. It’s National First Nations Day on the 21st; it’s Father’s Day on the 21st. First Nations were planning to go and offer protest that they weren’t being recognized.”

He believes the premier has many avenues to build ties with India that don’t involve closing a busy bridge and lots of opportunities for that to happen.

Direct Link: <http://www.news1130.com/2015/06/13/om-the-bridge-was-nothing-more-than-publicity-stunt-political-analyst/>

Renowned singers coming to Aboriginal Day

Asani trio has sung for Queen and Dalai Lama

Saturday, Jun 13, 2015 06:00 am

By: [Kevin Ma](#)



National Aboriginal Day is June 21.

A trio of award-winning aboriginal singers is coming to St. Albert next week to sing O Canada as part of National Aboriginal Day – and they'll be doing it in three languages.

June 21 is National Aboriginal Day in St. Albert, where hundreds of city residents come out to Lions Park to learn about Canada's first peoples and take in some free entertainment.

City residents will get a preview of this year's event today at the opening of the St. Albert Farmers' Market, says Libby Szarka, president of the St. Albert National Aboriginal Day Society.

Poundmaker's cultural adviser Clayton Saskatchewan shall bless the market in a traditional First Nations smudge ceremony, and Edmonton hoop dancer Kelsey Woolver will demonstrate the hoop dance. Elders will also be on hand in a teepee at the market to share lessons about First Nations, Métis and Inuit culture.

Aboriginal Day has particular relevance this year given the recent release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report on residential schools – the infamous institutions that sought to wipe out the very cultures this day promotes.

"It's a sensitive time for sure," Szarka says. Many people lost their language and culture for a long time because of the schools.

Events like Aboriginal Day are one way to help affect reconciliation, she says.

"It's about keeping the culture alive."

New acts

This year's Aboriginal Day show features a host of free activities and performances from across the Edmonton region, Szarka says.

New to this year's show is the group Asani – a trio of Edmonton women who have performed at the 2010 Winter Olympics and the 2014 Truth and Reconciliation Commission event in Edmonton.

“They do an amazing version of O Canada,” Szarka says – one that incorporates hand drums, throat-singing, English, French and Cree.

“I’m pretty excited to hear it.”

Asani co-founder Debbie Houle says the band started back in 1997 as a five-person group, but has since narrowed down to herself, Sarah Pocklington and Terry Morrison. They’ve put out two albums over the years, the second of which won a Canadian Folk Music Award.

“We were inspired by the sounds of Alberta, the loon and the northern lights,” she says, and they try to incorporate those into their music.

While most of their songs focus on beauty and celebration, some touch on heavier subjects like child abuse and the Indian Act.

Returning to St. Albert is Woolver, who will perform a 40-hoop hoop dance in Lions Park as part of National Aboriginal Day.

Woolver notes that hoop dancing was traditionally a male-only dance, and has only been open to women since 1994. It’s also only been in the last 15 years that practitioners have started to formally teach the dance to others. She teaches the dance in Edmonton Catholic schools – traditionally, dancers had to learn from watching other dancers.

“It’s one of the most creative dance styles we have as First Nations,” she says, as it lets you tell your own narrative through the shapes and moves you create with the hoops.

Other activities include Inuit throat-singing by Jenna Broomfield, a round-dance, face-painting, char and caribou tasting, and a Red River jig-off involving audience members, says Szarka.

Time to reconcile?

The release of the commission’s report gives everyone a reason to look within to see what role they can play in reconciliation, Houle says.

“It can be as easy as just exploring, finding out from each other what that history of Canada means.”

Events like National Aboriginal Day give us a chance to come together and share who we are, Houle continues.

“We need to honour who we came from. It’s who we are ... it’s our heritage.”

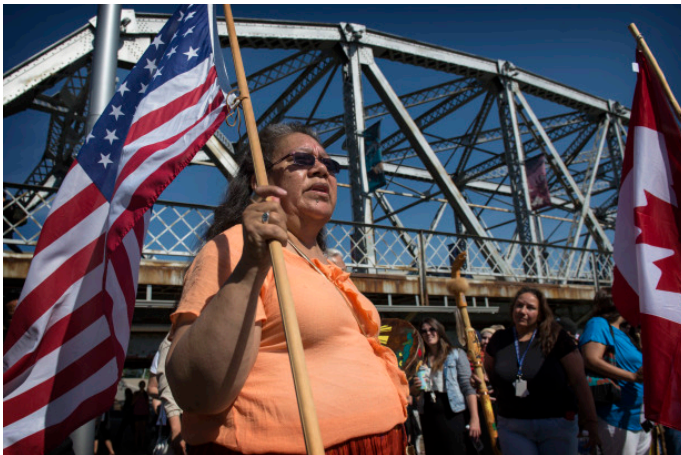
National Aboriginal Day runs from noon to 5:15 p.m. on June 21. The preview event is from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. this June 13 at the farmers’ market.

Visit the St. Albert National Aboriginal Day Festival Facebook page for the full schedule.

Direct Link: <http://www.stalbertgazette.com/article/20150613/SAG0801/306139974/-1/sag0801>

Nenshi consulting First Nations on possible renaming of Calgary’s Langevin Bridge

By [Robson Fletcher](#) Metro, June 15, 2015 | 1:05 pm



Charlotte (Yellow Horn) McLeod stops the annual Peace March procession to sing an honour song at Langevin Bridge, which was named after Hector-Louis Langevin, one of the architects of Canada’s residential school system.

Renaming the Langevin Bridge is among the ideas Mayor Naheed Nenshi is considering, in consultation with local First Nations, as Calgary looks to act on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report.

“There has been quite a bit of talk in the public – many, many citizens have approached us with the idea of making a more deeply symbolic gesture of reconciliation that could include something like the renaming of the Langevin Bridge,” the mayor said during Monday’s city council meeting. “I have been seeking different perspectives on this from First Nations people, from our advisory committee, from historians, and so on, on what that might look like.”

The bridge was named for Hector-Louis Langevin, who helped pave the way for Canada's confederation and also was an early proponent of the residential-school system. He argued in favour of removing aboriginal children from their families, lest they "remain savages."

Charlotte (Yellow Horn) McLeod, whose mother and father both went through the residential-school system, told Metro [she was "humbled"](#) when she heard discussion from some [members of city council](#) about renaming the bridge, as the Langevin moniker is a reminder of a painful past.

"I really hope they do rename it to a First Nations name," she said. "It would be so moving."

Nenshi said Monday the city is considering numerous ways to act on the TRC report.

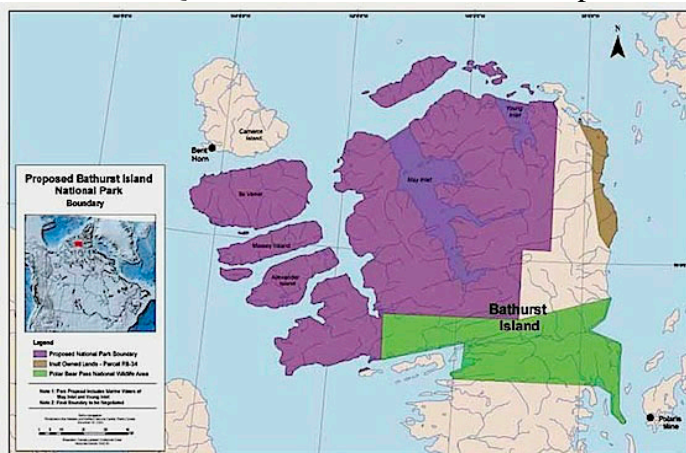
"I really look forward to bringing something to this council in the upcoming weeks and months, to talk about what that symbol of reconciliation would be," he said.

Direct Link: <http://metronews.ca/news/calgary/1397210/nenshi-consulting-first-nations-on-possible-renaming-of-calgarys-langevin-bridge/>

Aglukkaq tables bill aimed at creating new Nunavut national park

Qikiqtani Inuit Association "celebrates" park, releases copy of Inuit impact and benefits deal

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, June 16, 2015 – 2:20 pm



This map from Parks Canada shows the boundaries of new national park being proposed for Nunavut: the Qausuittuq National Park in the High Arctic. The purple shows the proposed park boundaries, the beige Inuit-owned lands and the green Polar Bear Pass National Wildlife Area. The proposed park borders, intended to protect habitat for the endangered Peary caribou, skirt the oil-rich Bent Horn oil field on Cameron Island where a commercial well produced oil until 1996.

(Updated June 16, 6:00 p.m.)

The creation of a national park on Nunavut's Bathurst Island in the High Arctic, first proposed over two decades ago, is a step closer to becoming reality, a June 16 news release from Nunavut MP Leona Aglukkaq says.

Aglukkaq, the federal minister responsible for Parks Canada, announced June 15 the introduction of a bill in the House of Commons to establish Qausuittuq National Park under the Canada National Parks Act, the release said.

"The bill is a step towards creating Qausuittuq as Canada's 45th national park," the release said.

Qausuittuq, the "place where the sun doesn't rise" in Inuktitut, covers about 20,000 kilometres on the northern portion of Bathurst Island and would be Nunavut's fifth national park.

The new national park "will give the adventurous tourist unprecedented access to one of the more remote corners of the world," the release said, while protecting natural and cultural heritage, "including the endangered Peary caribou."

Although the Peary caribou are listed as an endangered species, a regional biologist with the Government of Nunavut told *Nunatsiaq News* in December 2014 that [the Nunavut herd likely numbers around 4,000 caribou.](#)

Before the park can be made official under the National Parks Act, the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement requires that an Inuit Impact Benefit Agreement be signed between Parks Canada and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association.

A representative from Parks Canada told *Nunatsiaq News* in November 2012 that [IIBA negotiations at the time were in "last stages."](#)

Aglukkaq's news release did not say if an IIBA had been finalized with the QIA, but the QIA released what appears to be [a copy of the IIBA late on June 16,](#) when it popped up on the organization's website, undated and unsigned.

At the same time, the QIA said in a news release they celebrate the creation of the national park.

The IIBA provides for co-management of the park through a joint Inuit-Parks Canada committee, as well as training for a small number of workers and financial provisions for tourism and education.

It's not clear if the enabling legislation for the new park will get passed before the House of Commons dissolves for a federal election that's expected no later than Oct. 19, 2015.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674aglukkaq_tables_bill_aimed_at_creating_new_nunavut_national_park/

Indigenous gardens take root in downtown Winnipeg

Native plants featured in gardens outside APTN's headquarters on Portage Avenue

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 16, 2015 10:29 AM CT Last Updated: Jun 16, 2015 3:07 PM CT

Downtown Winnipeg has a new garden featuring indigenous plants, including those used in aboriginal cultures.

The first indigenous gardens were planted on Tuesday morning by volunteers from the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, RBC and the City of Winnipeg.



Blue lobellias bloom in an indigenous garden outside the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network's headquarters on Portage Avenue. (Trevor Brine/CBC)

Located in front of APTN's headquarters on 339 Portage Ave., the five garden beds feature indigenous "planting schemes and materials, based on community ideas and feedback," the Downtown BIZ said in a news release.

The gardens have eight types of plants, says Stephanie Voyce, the Downtown BIZ's manager of placemaking, cleanliness and transportation.

“We have plants such as sage, ☐ounselor, sweetgrass, rudbeckia. They’re beautiful, a lot of them are very colourful — what you’d see in a wildflower meadow,” she said.

Members of the Downtown BIZ’s customer service team will be stationed outside APTN until Thursday, talking to people about the traditional uses of each type of plant. Written descriptions are also available at the gardens.

Voyce said the group wants to have some original prairie plants in the downtown core and recognize their roles in indigenous culture.

The Downtown BIZ hopes to eventually launch an indigenous garden competition with local gardeners, she added.



Community members at the planting of the first indigenous gardens in downtown Winnipeg on Tuesday. (Trevor Brine/CBC)

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/indigenous-gardens-take-root-in-downtown-winnipeg-1.3115597>

Business Leaders Work On First Nation Library Project

The Young Professionals of Nanaimo (YPN) and Herold Engineering have announced they are teaming up to help build a new library in the traditional Snuneymuxw territory. The project will help provide the Snuneymuxw First Nation with a readily accessible education and information resource. Snuneymuxw Councilor Emmy Manson feels the project will open the door to many new opportunities, and looks forward to creating a learning centre that provides access to teachings centered on education, language, technology and culture.



“The most important thing for us is access,” said Manson. “Library programs often focus on children, but adult literacy is a large struggle in our community due to residential schools and colonization. We want to create a learning space that is not just about academia, but that also reflects our culture. It is important to implement our heritage early on, and provide a space that our children and community can identify with,” she said.

The undertaking was inspired by the [Write to Read Project](#), an initiative originally started by former Lieutenant Governor of B.C, the Honourable Steven L. Point. The ***Write to Read Project*** helps create ongoing and lasting relationships between people living in urban environments such as towns and cities, and the First Nations people of British Columbia who live in rural, remote or suburban communities – areas that may not be well served by educational and employment opportunities. The project’s primary goal is to assist with efforts to improve literacy in aboriginal communities across British Columbia.

Work on the initiative has already begun, with Britco Structures Inc. donating two trailers to form the base components of the library. Mike Herold has also agreed to donate his engineering services to the endeavor while the YPN will be spearheading the fundraising initiative to equip the new facility. The group’s funding target is \$100,000.

Herold is passionate about First Nations issues and is a long-time advocate of this program, having already participated in a number of these projects across the province. The president of Herold Engineering says he is excited to drive this initiative forward in his hometown of Nanaimo. “We need to change the system, and it starts with education,” he said. “It doesn’t matter whose fault it is or how we got here – all of us need to step up and help the fight.”

The Young Professionals of Nanaimo were originally introduced to this project by Herold, and immediately saw the value of its involvement. “We see this partnership as something that can benefit our entire community,” said YPN president, Daniel Martinez.

The final location of the library has not been formally decided, but a number of different sites are being considered. Planners anticipate a final decision will be made shortly. If members of the public are interested in getting involved with the Library project they are encouraged to contact the YPN at pr@ypnanaimo.com for more details.

Direct Link: <http://nanaimobusinessnews.ca/2015/06/18/business-leaders-work-on-first-nation-library-project/>

Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement

Man who attacked Vancouver First Nations elder designated dangerous offender

By Jennifer Saltman, The Province June 12, 2015



Kenneth Kirton has been sentenced to 12 years in prison, minus 1,776 days of credit for time served. He was convicted of aggravated assault, robbery and assault after an attack on First Nations elder Pearl Cecil in her east Vancouver apartment. Kirton has also been designated Kirton a dangerous and long-term offender. He is subject to a 10-year long-term supervision order after his release from prison

A man who violently attacked and robbed a 74-year-old First Nations elder has been designated a dangerous and long-term offender.

Kenneth Kirton, 48, was convicted in October 2013 of aggravated assault, robbery and assault. He was sentenced last week in provincial court in Vancouver to 12 years in prison followed by a 10-year long-term supervision order.

In the early morning hours of March 4, 2012, Kirton went to the East Vancouver apartment of Pearl Cecil. Kirton had been dating one of Cecil's daughters for a number of years, and he asked to stay the night because he had missed the last SkyTrain to Surrey.

Cecil had known Kirton for 10 years and thought of him like a son. She let him in and set up a bed for Kirton on the floor next to her cot in the living room.

A short time later, as Cecil lay on her cot, Kirton attacked her with what she believed to be a screwdriver, stabbing her several times in the head, face, neck and upper body. She also sustained a bite wound to her right hand. During the attack, she was forced face down into a pillow and nearly smothered.

Before fleeing, Kirton stole Cecil's purse. He was addicted to alcohol and drugs and planned to use the money in the purse to buy drugs.

Cecil grabbed the phone and ran out of her apartment. A security guard met her in the lobby of the apartment building and called an ambulance.

She spent four days in the hospital, and continues to suffer physically and emotionally from the attack.

Kirton surrendered to police two days after the attack and has been in custody ever since.

At trial, Kirton admitted to being at Cecil's apartment, but denied assaulting her. The court did not accept his evidence as reliable and credible.

According to the written judgment released on Thursday, Kirton testified at his sentencing hearing that he had lied during the trial and now takes full responsibility for the attack on Cecil. He does not remember everything about that night because he had been drinking and doing drugs.

Kirton testified that he is ready, willing and able to participate in a treatment program in prison and while on release.

Judge Gregory Rideout accepted Kirton's evidence at the hearing.

Although he concluded that Kirton — who has a criminal record that includes convictions for sexual assault, break and enter and assault — should be designated a dangerous offender, Rideout said he was satisfied that a lesser measure than an indeterminate sentence would protect the public against Kirton reoffending.

He sentenced Kirton to 12 years in prison, minus 1,776 days of credit for time served. He also designated Kirton a long-term offender and ordered that he be subject to a 10-year long-term supervision order after his release from prison.

Direct Link:

<http://www.theprovince.com/news/Vancouver+attacked+First+Nations+elder+designated/11131870/story.html>

Longer waits for parole disadvantage aboriginal offenders: report

SEAN FINE – JUSTICE WRITER

The Globe and Mail

Published Sunday, Jun. 14, 2015 10:27PM EDT

Last updated Monday, Jun. 15, 2015 5:40AM EDT

The vast majority of aboriginal offenders in federal prison are held long past the date they become eligible for parole, giving them less time under supervised release and – by the government’s own calculations – shrinking their chances of success at living a free life again.

Almost 85 per cent of aboriginal inmates are held until federal authorities have little choice but to release them, according to a new report from the Public Safety Ministry, which is responsible for corrections.

Under federal law, inmates must be released, under supervision, at the two-thirds point of their sentence, unless authorities believe there is a high likelihood those offenders will commit a violent crime. For non-aboriginal inmates, the corresponding figure is 69.3 per cent. The report did not explain why the figures are so much higher for aboriginal offenders.

The difficulties for aboriginal offenders in obtaining their release echo the situation at the front end of the system. A disproportionate number of aboriginal people arrive in federal prison each year, despite a federal sentencing law that requires judges to consider alternatives to custody for native people. Aboriginal people make up 23.2 per cent of federal inmates, but only about 4 per cent of the Canadian population.

A spokesperson for Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney commented on the report Sunday: “Our Conservative government believes that criminals belong behind bars,” said Jeremy Laurin. “Conditional release is not a right, it must be earned. Offenders have access to correctional programming that addresses their criminally.”

The findings on release rates come as the country’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission reported this month that disproportionate imprisonment is part of the legacy of Canada’s century-long system of forced residential schooling for aboriginal children. Supreme Court Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin said last month Canada committed “cultural genocide” against native peoples.

The justice and correctional systems have explicitly acknowledged that history of inequality, but aboriginal offenders are still seen as a higher risk when entering and leaving the system.

“The difficulty is that a lot of the elements that define risk are factors that the individual can’t do anything about,” Howard Sapers, an ombudsman for federal prisoners, said in an

interview. “If they come into prison with a history that includes addiction, homelessness, chronic unemployment, family dysfunction – those issues count against you in terms of risk assessment.” A lack of family support can make reintegration more difficult. But the Supreme Court, citing the residential schools, has said aboriginal offenders need special consideration, not more punishment, he said.

The Public Safety department has no doubt that prisoners released at the two-thirds point do not do very well. The system is known as “statutory release,” or release prescribed by law, rather than earned through parole. Most offenders are eligible for full parole at the one-third point.

“Statutory releases have the lowest rates of successful completion,” says the report, called the Corrections and Conditional Release Statistical Overview. The report covers the fiscal year 2013-14 (April 1 to March 31).

About 62 per cent of all offenders on statutory release reach the end of their term without violating their release conditions, being charged again or returning to jail. Of those released on full parole, 85 per cent completed their sentence without trouble; those on day parole succeeded in 89 per cent of cases.

Mr. Sapers says the corrections system needs to find ways to reduce the risks posed by aboriginal, and other offenders, without extending their time in jail. “The greater proportion of your sentence you can serve in the community under supervision and with conditions and support, the greater chance of your success,” he said.

By a wide range of measures, aboriginal offenders fare worse in prison than others. Arriving at an earlier age (48.8 per cent of those entering in 2013-14 were under 30, compared with 36 per cent of non-aboriginal inmates), they tend to be held in segregation more frequently and to be held in custody longer till their first release, Mr. Sapers said. They also make up 42.3 per cent of offenders held past their statutory release date, right to the end of their sentence, because of fears they will be violent, the report said. And once released, whether on parole or statutory release, they have their release suspended or revoked more frequently than others.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/longer-waits-for-parole-disadvantage-aboriginal-offenders-report/article24954998/>

Nunavik’s Ungaluk fund hands out \$11 million in 2015

“We want the program to be considered something that can make us healthier”

SARAH ROGERS, June 16, 2015 – 11:55 am



Ungaluk staff Pheobe Attogataaluk, left, and coordinator Sarah Airo speak to regional KRG counselor in Inukjuak last month. (PHOTO BY SARAH ROGERS)

Nunavik's Ungaluk crime prevention fund handed out more than \$11 million this year to projects across the region.

For 2015, just over 50 successful project applicants received money to pay for everything from healing initiatives to recreational programs to new summer literacy camps.

Ungaluk is the result of a 2006 deal with the Quebec government, which traded the construction of a provincial jail in Nunavik for about \$300 million, with Quebec paying Makivik Corp. and the Kativik Regional Government at least \$10 million a year until 2030.

"Social problems are big in the communities and we are looking for ways to heal," Ungaluk coordinator Sarah Airo told KRG meetings in Inukjuak last month.

"We don't want Ungaluk to be looked at as just a funding source, we want the program to be considered something that can make us healthier."

To do that, [Ungaluk was revised in 2014](#) in order to give higher priority to projects that help reduce substance abuse and addiction across the region.

With 70 per cent of the region's crimes linked to alcohol and drug abuse, and many of them violent, the program has re-focused its efforts on fighting addiction, violence and promoting social reintegration.

The application and distribution process has also changed, Airo said, to make the funding more accessible to Nunavimmiut.

Anyone can apply for funding, so long as the application highlights Ungaluk's priorities: the promotion of social integration or reintegration, support for trauma and mental health, and support for victims of crime and violence — all incorporating Inuit culture.

Nunavimmiut can apply for that funding through [Ungaluk's website](#), and deadlines are more flexible.

“Some communities ask: how much money do we have left? But with this new set-up, we no longer have money designated to each community,” Airo said. “It’s open for all.”

The call for 2016-17 project applications opened June 8 and will remain open until Sept. 4, Airo said.

Among the regional projects who received Ungaluk money in 2015, the Quaqtuaq-based Aaqitaurvik healing centre, which offers a number of different healing sessions throughout the region and in southern detention centres where Inuit inmates are serving sentences.

Ungaluk’s 2015 funding will go to recreation programs in the region, including the Nunavik Youth Development Hockey Program and Cirqiniq, Nunavik’s social circus program for youth.

Funding even goes to out-of-region programming, like the Montreal-based Tasiutigiiit Strengthening Connections Project. This offers support for Inuit children living primarily in non-Inuit foster and adoptive homes in the greater Montreal area, to help them maintain connections with their community and culture.

You can see a full list of regional and community projects that received funding from Ungaluk at its [website](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunaviks_ungaluk_fund_hands_out_1_1_million_in_2015/), although it does not list which amount each project received.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunaviks_ungaluk_fund_hands_out_1_1_million_in_2015/

Edmonton police join in National Aboriginal Day celebrations

By [Claire Theobald](#), *Edmonton Sun*

First posted: Thursday, June 18, 2015 09:12 PM MDT | Updated: Thursday, June 18, 2015 09:21 PM MDT



(Left to right) Alexandra Yellowbird, 11, Pisim Yellowbird, 8, and Ryley Hunter, 10, with Heavenly Skies Dance Society, perform a woman's dance at Muttart Conservatory in Edmonton, Alta., on Saturday, June 21, 2014. June 21 is National Aboriginal Day.

Edmonton's police officers are getting involved in local National Aboriginal Day events in an ongoing effort to improve their relationship with urban aboriginals.

"It gives the opportunity for us to have involvement with the community in a positive way, so when there is a negative we are not totally seen as the negative," said police Insp. Dan Jones.

On June 19, officers will join the Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Centre in their celebrations with a Tipi and face painting, while others will join in the A New Day celebration in Stony Plain.

On June 20, the Edmonton Native Healing Centre is expected to present a painting as a gift for Edmonton police officers as a symbol of ongoing reconciliation efforts and to honour the memory of missing and murdered aboriginal women.

These are just a few examples of a larger emphasis on cultural sensitivity and understanding in Edmonton policing, including new training and outreach initiatives aimed at fostering positive relationships with a growing urban aboriginal population, which Jones said could become the largest urban population in Canada if growth continues over the next few years.

"It's a development of trust with people in a community, marginalized people, people that normally have had issues with the police, people that feel that they are being criminalized by the police, we can break those barriers down and have those trust conversations," said Jones during an Edmonton Police Commission meeting on Thursday. "That's our next stage."

Edmonton police are currently working on a warrant program that helps people willing to come forward work through outstanding warrants proactively, and Knecht will be part of a first of its kind Association of Police Chiefs conference in Winnipeg in 2016 to find strategies for fostering trust between aboriginal, First Nations and Inuit people and police officers.

But while Jones said Edmonton police are encouraging aboriginals and police officers "to take steps towards each other," incarceration rates of aboriginals is estimated to be ten times higher than non-aboriginal people in Canada.

"If we step together we can start to solve the issues that are the root causes of these problems," Jones said.

National Aboriginal Day is celebrated on June 21.

Direct Link: <http://www.edmontonsun.com/2015/06/18/edmonton-police-join-in-national-aboriginal-day-celebrations>

Aboriginal Education & Youth

Elementary students in Prince Rupert to be taught the local First Nations Language

By Gerry Bellett, Vancouver Sun June 11, 2015



Starting in September, all five Prince Rupert elementary schools will provide all kindergarten to Grade 4 students with 40 minutes a week of instruction in the Sm'algayax language spoken by the area's First Nations residents.

Starting in September, all five Prince Rupert elementary schools will provide all kindergarten to Grade 4 students with 40 minutes a week of instruction in the Sm'algayax language spoken by the area's First Nations residents.

"We have had Sm'algayax taught in two schools — Conrad and Roosevelt elementary — for years but now we are going to teach it in all elementary schools," Tina Last, chair of the Prince Rupert school board, said Thursday.

She said Conrad and Roosevelt elementary schools traditionally had large numbers of First Nation students.

But the demographics of the area has changed with the closure of the local mill and aboriginal students now make up 62 per cent of the district's 2,000 or so elementary students in its five schools.

"This is about trying to save the Sm'algayax language and to promote cultural awareness in all our students. Kindergarten to Grade 4 will get 40 minutes of instruction a week. It will be basic and will involve such things as songs," she said.

Last, who has been board chair for 10 of her 13 years as a trustee, said relations between aboriginal and non-aboriginals in the community were good.

“We have very good relations. What we want is to foster even better relations. We know cultural identity is important to all students,” she said.

Last said instruction will be given by teachers fluent in the Sm’algyax language.

Read more:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/Elementary+students+Prince+Rupert+taught+local+First+Nations+Language/11129382/story.html#ixzz3dFJeBOuP>

Term cultural genocide ‘carries weight’ in the classroom, teacher says

Allows educators to ‘accurately portray what happened in Indian residential schools,’ says Kahente Horn-Miller

By Kahente Horn-Miller, [for CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 14, 2015 4:47 PM ET Last Updated: Jun 14, 2015 4:47 PM ET



The term cultural genocide allows educators to ‘accurately portray what happened in Indian residential schools,’ says university professor Kahente Horn-Miller

As I witnessed the unveiling of the recommendations from the landmark residential schools report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, I asked myself: What does this do for us as educators?

Then I knew. When commission chair Justice Murray Sinclair used the term cultural genocide to characterize what happened in the schools, I felt a sense of victory and hope because now I can call it what it is.

I also felt the weight of the burden I must hold as an educator in a major public institution. I take it on with great responsibility and pride. This is my role in reconciliation.

I have been teaching for the last four years in post-secondary institutions. I make a point of teaching my students about colonization in Canada. I teach about the continued impacts of residential schools on the lives of all Indigenous Peoples.

Until now, I have never used the term genocide in my classroom or even considered the term cultural genocide for that matter.

Cultural genocide carries weight

Why is the term a controversial one? It carries weight. Often left for the use of radicals, I and others felt it was too “out there” for our students to grasp and would have turned them off of the issue while making us look like extreme radicals in our classrooms.

As a Kanienkehaka (Mohawk) woman, the seven generations principle is something that guides my teaching method. It is a cornerstone to who we are as a people because it is about accountability — accountability for what you say and what you do.

So when I teach about residential schools, I am acutely aware of the way that I teach my students about such an important issue and the words I used to characterize it.

My goal has always been to provide them with the most well-rounded knowledge and I do this in a way that engenders dialogue and discussion.

Sometimes you need to make your language palatable, using words and concepts that foster openness and safety. I think I have been successful so far.

I have a lot of students who come into indigenous studies with little or no knowledge of residential schools. Many keep mum about this and some express the horror and guilt they feel for what their ancestors did.

I also have students who live with the day-to-day impacts of the residential schools. No one is immune. All Indigenous Peoples have some family member who has been to one of the schools, although many young people are not fully aware of what happened.

I thought using the term genocide would not have helped in creating the safe space necessary for learning about this important issue for any of my students.

Opening door for new dialogue

Yet, this is the direction we are headed.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's work has opened the door for us to begin this important dialogue on Canada's involvement in the genocide of Indigenous Peoples.

Recommendations have enabled educators to begin to accurately portray what happened in the context of this declaration and reconciliation.

What happened in the residential schools era is genocide. It is the absolute destruction of our ways, our languages, our families and identities.

From my perspective it is a stepping stone in the right direction to call it cultural genocide. It is the starting point to a much larger process of awareness, recognition and reconciliation.

As educators, we have a clear responsibility to continue to teach about the residential schools. Now we also have the go-ahead to call it cultural genocide.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/term-cultural-genocide-carries-weight-in-the-classroom-teacher-says-1.3113167>

'Kinship Care' program needed to fix broken child welfare system

There's too much bad press about Child and Family Services, First Nations welfare worker says

By Don Marks, [for CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 14, 2015 10:46 AM CT Last Updated: Jun 14, 2015 4:24 PM CT



Bobbi Pampana, CEO of the Southern First Nations Network of Care says the stronger families are, the fewer children will end up in care. (CBC)

What would you do if a parent with some obviously incorrigible teenage child showed up at your door in the middle of the night and the parent said: "I just can't take it anymore.

This kid won't listen ... always getting into trouble ... and I know it's just gonna get worse!

"You take this child. Maybe you can do better!"

'Our agencies do not want to take children into care. We want strong, healthy families living with hope and opportunity.' - *Bobbi Pompana, Southern First Nations Network*

It's a common reality for child welfare agencies. The agencies do what they can, but often they end up just accepting the blame for the situation, which now has more than 10,000 kids in care in Manitoba.

That's what Bobbi Pompana, the chief executive officer of the Southern First Nations Network of Care, says.

There comes a time when she stops and literally screams: "Get off our backs."

"These are complex problems steeped in poverty reaching back to colonialism and the multi-generational impact of the Indian residential school experience," Pompana says after taking a deep breath.

"Our agencies do not want to take children into care. We want strong, healthy families living with hope and opportunity, and yet as soon as that number comes up so high or another horrible human tragedy takes place, the media places all of the negative publicity on the agencies.

"We want to work with police, and with people who work in the justice system, like probation officers and social workers, the people who work at community-based recreational, cultural and educational organizations to combine our efforts, to strengthen families instead of combing the streets for some missing kids who have come into conflict with their parents or the justice system.

"We can't do that when we're constantly defending ourselves from some shortfall in the system [that] leaves all of us without the resources to deal with the problems before they happen."

'60s Scoop

Pompana has been working in the child welfare system ever since the infamous "Sixties Scoop" revealed the tragic consequences of removing indigenous children from their natural parents. The kids were placed in adoptive families outside their communities and culture, supposedly to provide the child with things their biological parents couldn't give them because of things like poverty.

The Sixties Scoop didn't work, but a movement toward "devolution" was beset with problems as well.

“Devolution was vastly under-funded, but the key failure was that money for indigenous staff training and development of alternative, indigenous-based programs wasn’t there,” says Pompana.

Even worse, traditional values and cultural ways had been de-prioritized and there were few programs available to reintroduce indigenous ways of doing things.

It is well known that the main reason the social system in Canada is broken is because of poverty, yet the resources to overcome this poverty have not been made available. Adults need money/jobs to pay for positive social, cultural, recreational and educational programs that will help them and their children stay away from negative activities — activities that bring them into conflict with society and the criminal justice system.

Yes, both the parents and the child need to take responsibility for their actions, but they should be given a proper chance to live a positive lifestyle.

Easy to blame agencies

Pompana says an easier answer is to just blame the agencies.

“There is too much negative publicity about the Child and Family Service (CFS) agencies apprehending children, when really the opposite is true,” Pompana says.

“What we really want to do is to work in a positive way with all of the other groups who are involved with our children and youth to make positive social changes.”

Pompana and the Southern First Nations Network of Care have introduced a new program called “Kinship Care” into the system. Kinship Care addresses the need for more foster homes that are parented by indigenous people. It does this by simplifying the foster-parent-approval process and brings more of a cultural balance to the entire affair.

“We are still going to meet the provincial standards required to become a foster parent, such as police background and abuse checks, but we also need to recognize the real-life situations of indigenous people who would make excellent foster parents.

“For example, there are medical backgrounds and checkups required from family doctors and many of these families do not have a family doctor,” says Pompana. “A medical reference from a walk-in clinic is not accepted and this disqualifies some very loving and responsible people from stepping up and caring for children.

“We also need to culturalize the system. Devolution was necessary but it was tragic to see how few resources were available to carry our history, culture, traditions and lifestyle forward. Our agencies have developed cultural camps and organized knowledge so that kids in care can develop the sense of identity they need to cope with growing up, and have knowledge, pride and a sense of identity about their culture and history — their lifestyle and traditions.”

And that needs to be a vital component, not some afterthought.

Kinship Care reduces the numbers of children in care by setting them on a more positive path and keeps them out of care by introducing them to more positive choices before they need to come into care.

'Makes sense to me.

Don Marks is a Winnipeg writer.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/kinship-care-program-needed-to-fix-broken-child-welfare-system-1.3112954>

First Nations family advocate discouraged after 1st week working with CFS

'I was devastated. And I wasn't anywhere near as devastated as the family,' Cora Morgan says

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 15, 2015 1:26 PM CT Last Updated: Jun 15, 2015 1:28 PM CT



Cora Morgan worked in restorative justice before becoming Manitoba's first family advocate for First Nations families working with CFS. (LinkedIn)

The family advocate for First Nations families dealing with Child and Family Services is devastated after her first week on the job, working for the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs.

The assembly created the position of family advocate to respond to mounting concerns about children in the care of CFS in Manitoba. More than 10,000 children are in care and roughly 90 per cent of them are aboriginal.

Cora Morgan, hired to fill the position, started last Monday.

On day one, Morgan said a grandmother came in to see her. The woman was desperate to find a way to get her grandchild out of CFS care and bring them home.

The next day, Morgan accompanied the same grandmother to her meeting with CFS.

“We had a great meeting – or what I thought was a good meeting – that we were going to get some answers and the family was going to do what it needed to do. And the following morning the CFS agency took away their visitation rights because they engaged me. And so with my involvement on Tuesday, it looked like they were in a worse-off position than when we started,” Morgan told CBC.

“I was devastated. And I wasn’t anywhere near as devastated as the family.”

Complex problems

“I think [the problem is] going to be a lot bigger and a lot more complicated than we anticipated,” Morgan said.

She said First Nations need to be involved in reforms to end the perpetual cycle of care.

“There needs to be supports to address issues or this will just be a contemporary version of residential schools, the Sixties Scoop and now we have CFS,” Morgan said.

While Morgan said she believes the solution to the child welfare system involves revamped legislation, she also sees that current legislation allows for some actions to be taken that aren’t happening at the moment. For example, she said she is skeptical about whether full investigations are conducted before a child is removed from a home. She also has not seen evidence of preventative measures being pursued.

“Prior to this role I worked in the area of restorative justice and I would see how many children would come through our doors as a result of being in CFS care, and knowing what I’ve learned over the years and all of these intricacies of residential school effects, I, as a First Nations person, didn’t want to look back 30 years from now and be here in this place and time, knowing that this was going on and I didn’t do anything about it,” Morgan said.

“I believe [the child welfare system is] in crisis. We have over 10,000 children in care who ultimately want to be back with their families and feel loved and supported and offered the same opportunities as other children.”

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/first-nations-family-advocate-discouraged-after-1st-week-working-with-cfs-1.3114007>

Probe of B.C. urban aboriginal agencies sought in light of Paige's Story

Questions surround funding and mandates of urban aboriginal agencies and leadership accountability

By Wawmeesh G. Hamilton, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 15, 2015 7:26 PM ET Last Updated: Jun 15, 2015 8:30 PM ET



B.C.'s Representative for Children and Youth wants urban aboriginal service agencies reviewed and aboriginal leadership held accountable in connection with the death of Paige, the 19-year-old Indigenous girl who died of an overdose on Vancouver's Downtown Eastside in 2013. (CBC)

In May, a [shocking report titled Paige's Story](#) was released by Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, the B.C. Representative for Children and Youth

The report outlined how Paige, an aboriginal teen, and her mother lived on Vancouver's gritty Downtown Eastside where she was regularly exposed to violence, neglect, open drug use and deplorable living conditions. Paige was 19 when she died of an overdose in 2013, and Turpel-Lafond cited the collective failure to act by multiple organizations as a factor in her death.

The report contained several key recommendations. Possibly the most significant is buried at the end — a call for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation to review all urban aboriginal program funding and publicly report the results.

Northwest Indigenous Council president Ernie Crey agrees the agencies and their delivery models should be examined.

"This is long overdue. These agencies should be held to account. It's a failed model. This is not just about money."

Crey says the recommendation should be acted on immediately.

He knows what persistent inaction feels like.

His sister Dawn Crey disappeared from the Downtown East Side in 2000. Her DNA was found on the Port Coquitlam pig farm of Robert Pickton but Pickton never faced any charges in relation to the discovery.

Pickton preyed on his victims on the Downtown Eastside, taking them to his pig farm and killing them.

He was convicted in 2007 of the second-degree murders of six women. He confessed to police that he killed 49 women.

“Sadly, this report (Paige’s Story) once again chronicles the abject failure of the Ministry of Children and Family Development, and its designated agencies to provide protection to a child in need,” said Crey.

Urban organizations unaccountable

Paige died of a drug overdose approximately one year after her mother suffered the same fate.



Paige, 19, died of a drug overdose after a troubled life on Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. Her story has opened up a discussion about social services available to at-risk youth in the DTES. (Representative for Children and Youth)

They were also living in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. The pair, originally from Kamloops, B.C., struggled with addictions.

Several agencies receive \$350 million to \$400 million annually to provide services to aboriginal and non-aboriginal clients in the area.

Despite this, the pair couldn’t find help.

“These organizations have conflicting mandates, or no clear mandate. It’s not clear what they do,” Turpel-Lafond said.

“There’s no accountability around who is funded to do what. I think this is a major concern to me.”

Aboriginal with no status

Paige’s aboriginal heritage comes from a First Nation in Kamloops. But her grandmother was disenfranchised, stripped of her First Nations status.

Non-status First Nations people can’t as readily access services afforded to status First Nations. Sadly, the family never regained status even after enfranchisement laws changed in 1985.

“Although people try to maintain connection, a lot of people have just been spit out and there’s no effort to connect them back,” Turpel-Lafond said.

Paige wasn’t entirely disconnected from aboriginal services. She received minimal support from small programs in Kamloops and Vancouver.

But as she and her mother sank deeper into poverty and addictions, more substantive support wasn’t available.

“There may have been organizations bouncing around out there. But they weren’t landing on the issue and really supporting her,” Turpel-Lafond said.

The [Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society](#) handles the cases of many — but not all — aboriginal children in care in Vancouver.

The \$30-million-per-year provincially funded agency never handled Paige’s file but Turpel-Lafond wants it to be reviewed.

“That’s a key issue – why are we not changing that pathway for young girls and boys that head there [the Downtown Eastside]?” she said. “Why aren’t we using aboriginal service organizations to change that?”

Province seeks clarity

A spokesperson with the Ministry of Children and Family Development says Turpel-Lafond needs to clarify her report.

For instance, the term “urban aboriginal programs” needs to be defined, as does which programs fit the definition.

As well, delegated aboriginal agencies, which are provincially mandated to administer provisions of the child, family and community service act, are already test reviewed and the results available publicly.

Non-delegated aboriginal agencies are a different story, however.

Non-delegated agencies are contracted by the province to provide family healing circles, counselors, cultural camps etc. Child protection isn't part of these agencies mandates, therefore reviews aren't performed.

The province does perform financial audits on non-delegated agencies, but privacy law prevents full disclosure of them.

"You would need to check with the non-delegated aboriginal agency directly to find out if they make their information available to the public," the spokesperson said.

The [Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council](#) represents 25 aboriginal service agencies in Vancouver.

Requests for an interview weren't returned.

Aboriginal leaders also to blame

Turpel-Lafond called the day she released her report "a day of accountability", and chastised the Ministry of Children and Families for how Paige's file was handled.

But aboriginal leaders are also accountable, she said.

They haven't addressed the historical pattern of aboriginal people being lost to the DTES or similar environments by advocating with health and education authorities, Turpel-Lafond said.

"Where's the collaboration to change this? That's a pretty profound question that hangs over Paige's story. There's so many others on the same path."

Also, according to Turpel-Lafond, 60 per cent of aboriginal people now live off-reserve and it's unclear who has program responsibility for them.

If aboriginal leaders want to improve the lives of vulnerable aboriginal children they have to work together first, Turpel-Lafond said.

"They don't have the levers of government or financial capacity. But they do have ability to become ☐ounsel and advocate," she said.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/probe-of-b-c-urban-aboriginal-agencies-sought-in-light-of-paige-s-story-1.3090969>

Winnipeg School Division to study indigenous immersion

Trustee says the province's largest school division can help restore lost language and culture

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 16, 2015 7:23 AM CT Last Updated: Jun 16, 2015 10:22 AM CT



Winnipeg School Division trustee Kevin Freedman introduced a motion for the division to come up with a plan to create an indigenous immersion program. (Facebook)

The Winnipeg School Division is on the road to creating an indigenous immersion program.

Trustee Kevin Freedman brought forward a motion Monday night for a program he said could help restore lost languages.

“I’ve worked in the inner city for much of my career and I’ve spoken with many people who have effectively lost their language and their family through a history of policies by our government and by treatment at the local level as well,” Freedman said.

“I feel that we have a very disempowered indigenous community in Manitoba and I think that language is equitable with empowerment. I think that it’s very important for this large population we have a significant population in Manitoba to be able to be educated in the languages of their ancestors, if they so choose and I think that the Winnipeg School Division has got the resources, the expertise, the student body and the will to implement such a program and I think it’s about time we do,” Freedman said.

The administration has until November to come up with a detailed plan on how it would implement the program including the number of teachers and resources necessary to maintain a comprehensive immersion program.

“We have to get enough teachers that can teach for at least the elementary years,” Freedman said.

The report is expected in November, but Freedman admits it could take anywhere from four to six years to get such a program up and running.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-school-division-to-study-indigenous-immersion-1.3115158>

Aboriginal women find success through education

Tamara Bull and Deanna Reder believe education is critical for opening doors for aboriginal women

By The Early Edition, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 16, 2015 1:53 PM PT Last Updated: Jun 16, 2015 1:53 PM PT



Tamara Bull, a Haida artist, says education is critical for success and survival. (CBC)

Tamara Bull once heard someone say "An educated Indian is a dangerous thing."

She believes it's true, particularly when it comes to educated aboriginal women.

"It's going to be women that are going to change our communities, I know it," said Bull, a Haida artist.

"We're too smart and even though people are trying to kill us with [the missing women](#), and trying to oppress us in a million different areas, women somehow have a way of navigating this.

"And I know in our Haida culture, women are so powerful that if they have a thought, that actually could change the outcome of somebody's life. That's how we were raised, that women are that powerful."

Education builds up self-worth

Bull didn't always feel this confident. Growing up, she struggled with math and English in school. Though she thrived at art, her father didn't want her to be an artist, and burnt all her art supplies and paintings.

Despite that, Bull sought an art education in secret. She studied graphic design and fashion design in Vancouver and Toronto, and went to film and television school.

Even though she was passionate about art, Bull says she struggled with loving and respecting her own work. She only just recently framed one of her pieces for the first time.

"I remember when I went to art school and I would see people frame their artwork on the wall and I couldn't believe people did that," she said.

"It took me a long time to get my head around that, as an aboriginal woman, I had value, and as an artist, my art had value."

Education opens doors

Education not only builds up self esteem for aboriginal women, it also empowers them and opens doors for them, says Deanna Reder, an associate professor in the Department of First Nations Studies and English at Simon Fraser University.



Deanna Reder, a SFU associate professor, says education empowers women and open doors for them. (CBC)

"At school, you can discover parts of yourself that you don't really know exist," she said.

"It's at school where you can learn new ways of approaching problems or things or yourself, or the stories in your family."

Reder also says classrooms are places where "indigenous ways of knowing" can be highlighted and taught to new generations so that negative perceptions of aboriginal people can be dispelled.

This story is part of a series called Dream Makers, featuring aboriginal women`s stories of strength, survival and success.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/aboriginal-women-find-success-through-education-1.3116002>

Woman says modern aboriginal teachings lacking

By [Sebastian Leck](#)

Wednesday, June 17, 2015 4:56:43 EDT PM



Elder Danka Brewer teaches a lesson to a group of grades 4 and 5 students at the Frontenac Public School. (Anisa Rawhani/For The Whig-Standard)

Georgina Riel says she's been raising objections for more than a decade about the way aboriginal topics are taught.

Riel's two children have gone through several schools in Kingston's public school system, including Amherstview Public School and Rideau Public School.

Riel said that while their teachers are well intentioned, the approach to aboriginal issues often reduces Aboriginal Peoples to historical civilizations. Schools usually don't teach aboriginal topics past Confederation, which leaves the modern history of Aboriginal Peoples, she said.

“To my mind, it reinforces stereotypes, it reinforces racism, it reinforces the idea that Aboriginal Peoples are a historical civilization. It doesn’t recognize that people exist today,” she said.

Last Monday, a report by People for Education found that Ontario public schools have increased aboriginal educational opportunities but lack professional development related to aboriginal issues. It found that “only 29% of elementary schools and 47% of secondary schools offer professional development to staff on aboriginal issues.”

The report came days after the publication of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s report on residential schools in Canada.

Riel said she’s happy to see the report focus on aboriginal education. The lack of focus on contemporary Aboriginal Peoples is a particular concern for her as a parent, she added.

“I find it disturbing that my kids, who are of aboriginal ancestry, are taught in the classroom as if they no longer exist as a people,” she said. She doesn’t blame the teachers, though. She said she understands they likely never learned to teach aboriginal topics in university.

Teachers often have difficulty understanding why the curriculum is inadequate, she added, and she’s taken over some lessons for teachers in the past.

Riel is an organizer for this year’s National Aboriginal Day celebration in Kingston. She currently sits on several aboriginal committees and advisory boards.

Kevin Reed, the aboriginal education curriculum consultant for the Limestone District School Board, said the school board is working to make aboriginal content contemporary as well as historical.

The historical focus of the elementary school curriculum can make that challenging, he said. The current curriculum covers settlers and Aboriginal Peoples in Grade 3, ancient civilizations in Grade 4 and the arrival of Europeans in Grade 5.

“It’s easy if you’re a student to come to the conclusion that it’s a historical topic and not a contemporary topic. So, yes, you constantly have to remind people,” he said. Consistent communications with teachers emphasize that aboriginal issues are contemporary, he added.

Reed has been charged with incorporating aboriginal content into curricula and supporting aboriginal education across the district. Since his hiring in 2009, the Limestone board has added new programs focusing on aboriginal education.

The Ontario Ministry of Education launched an Aboriginal Education Strategy in January 2007, which identified aboriginal education as a key priority.

Reed was one of the authors of a 2011 educational resource named “Getting to Know Turtle Island.” The 146-page guide describes recommended teaching approaches and suggested lessons for grades 1 to 8. The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto has since adopted the guide.

Danka Brewer, a Shabot Obaadjiwan elder, provides special lessons on aboriginal topics in the Limestone board. Brewer led a group of grade 4 and 5 students last Friday at Frontenac Public School’s library. During the lesson, she told students about Shabot Obaadjiwan traditions and led a drumming session.

Near the end, a boy asked: “Do you live in a wigwam?”

“I’ve slept in one, but I live in a house just like everyone else,” Brewer said.

Reed said Brewer offers professional development sessions for teachers on approaching aboriginal topics. Between 40 and 50 staff members typically attend those sessions, he added.

“(We) try to give them a sense of what kind of overall approach they might want to take,” he said.

Superintendent Terri Slack from the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board stated in an email that it provides “the opportunity to develop an understanding of aboriginal cultures, experiences and perspectives.”

She stated that lessons run by elders and aboriginal-focused programs are available to all students. Those programs include a leadership camp in Quyon, Que., and local Aboriginal Experience Days.

An aboriginal advisory council advises both school boards. It includes representatives from organizations such as the Metis Nation of Ontario and the Four Directions Student Centre.

The Limestone board advises teachers to find resources on aboriginal education from the Teacher Resource Centre at Queen’s University’s Faculty of Education. Lindsay Morcom, an assistant professor at the faculty, runs the Aboriginal Teacher Education stream for the bachelor of education program. For her, the solution is “a matter of constant education.”

“There needs to be an access point for teachers to ask those hard questions that may make them uncomfortable. It’s hard to acknowledge our own biases and ignorance,” she said. Those access points, which include staff like Kevin Reed, are available but need to be sought out by teachers, she said.

Queen’s Faculty of Education will be implementing a new, mandatory aboriginal education component, which she said will provide teachers with more resources.

To avoid alienating aboriginal students, she said it's important to integrate content throughout the curriculum and stay aware of diversity among aboriginal groups.

“It's not something that we're studying just for today, it's something we're studying because it's part of Canada.”

Direct Link: <http://www.thewhig.com/2015/06/17/woman-says-modern-aboriginal-teachings-lacking>

NORDIK announces social enterprise project geared towards aboriginal youth

Sarah Petz

Wednesday, June 17, 2015 9:48:36 EDT AM



Algoma University

The NORDIK Institute at Algoma University is starting a pilot project that will give urban aboriginal youth the skills they need to become social entrepreneurs while reconnecting them with traditional aboriginal cultural and spiritual teachings.

The project, Urban Indigenous Youth for Change, is being funded by \$100,000 grant from the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, the institute announced Tuesday.

The project will feature programming that offers youth a blend of mainstream business education and traditional knowledge.

Jordan Tobobondung, partnership development coordinator at NORDIK Institute, said the hope is that the project gives urban aboriginal youth the right blend of skills they need in order to tackle concrete social issues they see in the community.

“We're not only focusing on business and western marketing, we're also focusing on allowing them to reclaim their identities and to be able to take what they've learned from [traditional] teachings and wherever their histories come from, and then, to learn the western business aspects of things, and be able to look at the world through both of those lenses,” she said.

The project will also connect youth with First Nations community members to learn from, she said.

“The people that are hunters, they could be involved, the people that know the land...then the youth are able to see the people they know from their communities that they've probably known their entire lives, but don't realize the kind of knowledge those people carry within their communities,” Tobobondung said.

Having a program that connects aboriginal youth with their culture is essential for giving them the confidence they need to enact social change in their communities, said Candace Neveau, who will be helping with outreach for the project.

“In helping them to be able to design their own ideas from their own strengths... we can help build them up based on their own strengths and what they know,” Neveau said.

“Providing these business structures with these cultural aspects as well, it's like we're building them up and getting them confident and ready to start these initiatives.”

As an urban aboriginal woman, Neveau said having that connection to her culture has always been a huge asset to her when getting through difficult times in her life. Now, she said she wants to help other aboriginal youth in Sault Ste. Marie be able to have that resource.

“That's a huge support that always helped me get by, just knowing all these ceremonies, the spirituality of being a First Nations, that's what always got me through bullying, got me through high school, it got me through a lot of hurtful times. It hurts me to know that a lot of other First Nations youth don't know about that,” Neveau said

“For me, I want to help share that knowledge and show that we have this awesome way of doing things.”

Urban Indigenous Youth for Change will be a partnership between NORDIK institute, Sault Ste. Marie Indian Friendship Centre, Algoma University's Community Economic and Social Development (CESD) program, 4Rs Youth Movement, and Generation Connection with the University of Toronto.

The first phase of the project will comprise of consultation sessions with urban aboriginal youth and First Nations community members. Those interested in participating can contact Tabobondung at jordan.tobobondung@algomau.ca or by calling 705.949.2301, Ext. 4258.

Direct Link: <http://www.saultstar.com/2015/06/16/nordik-announces-social-enterprise-project-geared-towards-aboriginal-youth>

B.C. the latest province to make aboriginal history and culture mandatory in the classroom

By [Dene Moore](#) / [Daily Brew](#) – 21 hours ago



What did you learn in history class about residential schools? About colonialism? Treaties? The Indian Act?

For most Canadians, the answer is likely: nothing.

Changing that is one of the many recommendations to come from the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission report released earlier this month](#), and British Columbia says it will introduce a new K-12 curriculum this fall that includes the history and legacy of residential schools.

But education is a provincial jurisdiction and across the country, there's a wide range when it comes to aboriginal history in classrooms.

"In some provinces, they're doing really well. Others, they're failing miserably," says Carlie Chase, executive director of the [Legacy of Hope Foundation](#), an aboriginal charity that aims to get indigenous history into Canadian classrooms.

In B.C., the new curriculum will include history, culture and First Nations perspectives across subject areas and grade levels.

For example, kindergarten student will learn about aboriginal uses of plants and animals while Grade 5 students will learn about indigenous concepts of environmental stewardship, says education ministry spokesman Scott Sutherland.

“The ministry is also committed to ensuring the history and ongoing legacy of the residential school system is included throughout the new curriculum, particularly when learning about topics such as discrimination, inequality, oppression and the impacts of colonialism,” Sutherland tells Yahoo Canada News.

It’s a step that Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, with their large proportions of aboriginal populations, took several years ago.

It’s been almost three years since the two territories adopted and adapted to their specific regions a curriculum developed by the foundation.

The “100 Years of Loss” curriculum kit includes videos of residential school students’ stories and a teacher’s guide with up to 24 hours of activities to explore aboriginal culture and history.

Demand was so high they quickly ran out of kits. The foundation is now raising money to make more and develop an elementary kit with age-appropriate lessons.

But the demand has been driven largely by individual teachers who have taken it upon themselves to address this gaping hole in Canadian education.

B.C., Nunavut and the Northwest Territories and a few other provinces are the exception, making aboriginal history and culture mandatory in the classroom.

In most provinces, it’s relegated to elective native studies courses in high school, says Chase.

“It’s not mandatory,” says Chase, whose mother and grandmother both went to residential schools and never spoke about it.

It wasn’t until university that she learned a little bit about residential schools.

“Why didn’t I know this before?” she says. “In the United States, no student is going to leave the education system without knowing about slavery. Why in Canada do we let our students leave our education system without knowing about the cultural genocide that happened here?”

Manitoba has a DVD, “From Apology to Reconciliation,” and a teaching guide that’s been available for Grade 9-11 social studies teachers since September 2012.

[Alberta has announced that First Nations history, including treaties and residential schools, would be a mandatory part of K-12 education.](#)

“Starting with the youngest members of our society, Alberta commits to residential school survivors, their families and communities that Albertans will hear your stories and know your truths,” the government said last year.

Yukon made a similar announcement in 2014 that aboriginal history, including residential schools, will be taught from K-12.

The eastern provinces, they have “a ways to go,” Chase says.

Ontario education officials did not immediately respond to a request for information. Premier Kathleen Wynne has expressed interest in a revised curriculum.

“It’s great to see B.C. doing this. It’s going to take more provincial leaders to say ‘this is what we’re doing,’” Chase says.

The systemic racism and social ills linked to aboriginal Canada’s history continue today, in high youth suicide rates, the disproportionate number of First Nations children in care and other economic and social challenges, she says.

Reconciliation is the way forward and “you start with knowing the truth.”

Direct Link: <https://ca.news.yahoo.com/blogs/dailybrew/aboriginal-canada-in-the-classroom-b-c-announces-200643757.html>

New B.C. school curriculum will have aboriginal focus

Dirk Meissner

VICTORIA — The Canadian Press

Published Wednesday, Jun. 17, 2015 3:46PM EDT

Last updated Wednesday, Jun. 17, 2015 6:40PM EDT

Students as young as 10 in British Columbia will soon be taught that past discriminatory government policies towards Aboriginal Peoples resulted in the crushing legacy of Canada’s residential-school system.

Starting in Grade 5, students will learn about the schools and other racist government programs, such as the Chinese Head Tax, as part of a new education curriculum.

The changes for kindergarten-to-Grade-12 students include lessons that focus on aboriginal history and culture, and will be implemented provincewide by 2016.

B.C.'s Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Minister John Rustad said Wednesday the classes will give students a more complete understanding of the province's history with its Aboriginal Peoples and strengthen reconciliation efforts.

He said students will study topics such as discrimination, inequality, oppression and the impacts of colonialism.

The changes are part of the B.C. government's response to 94 recommendations in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report on the residential-school system.

The commission recommended the creation and funding of aboriginal-education legislation, which protects languages and cultures and closes the education gap for Aboriginal Peoples. After six years of hearings, the report concluded Canada's residential-school system was a form of cultural genocide.

"The curriculum classes we are looking at are all about giving students a fuller understanding of our history in Canada," Rustad said. "There are many things that have happened in the province of British Columbia people are not aware of."

B.C. teachers will soon get to look at the curriculum so they can prepare for the courses.

"Aboriginal history, culture and perspectives have been integrated across subject areas and grade levels in B.C.'s new curriculum," said an Education Ministry statement.

A ministry spokesman said B.C.'s kindergarten-to-Grade-9 teachers have the opportunity to teach aboriginal-focused classes starting this September.

Course content for Grades 10-to-12 students will become part of a public consultation process and be available in 2016.

"The ministry is also committed to ensuring the history and ongoing legacy of the residential-school system is included throughout the new curriculum, particularly when learning about topics such as discrimination, inequality, oppression and the impacts of colonialism," said the statement.

Education Minister Peter Fassbender said in a statement that education brings positive change.

"Through the revised curriculum, we will be promoting greater understanding, empathy and respect for aboriginal history and culture among students and their families," he said.

The ministry said Grade 5 students will also be expected to learn about past discriminatory government policies, including the Chinese Head Tax.

"Teaching students about the past discrimination minority groups faced in this province ... allows students to develop their competency skills and encourages them to value

diversity, care for each other and stand up for the rights of others and themselves,” said the ministry statement.

First Nations Summit Grand Chief Ed John said following the release of the commission’s report last month that too few Canadians, especially children, are aware of the residential-school experience.

“You might want to learn about Prince Charles and the Queen, that’s good, but you should also want to know about your own history in this province, and we don’t see enough of that in terms of the relationships between First Nations and the public,” he said.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/new-bc-school-curriculum-will-have-aboriginal-focus/article25003962/>

Ontario wants students to learn about Indigenous treaties

By
[Ashley Splawinski](#)
| June 18, 2015



According to the official [Government of Ontario](#) website, Ontario is covered by 46 treaties and similar agreements. These were established between the years 1781 and 1930. However, while those of us who have progressed through Ontario's education system most likely recall a rudimentary overview of Indigenous cultures and contributions in social studies class, learning about the substance of treaties was rarely emphasized.

Liberal MPP for Willowdale and minister of Aboriginal Affairs, David Zimmer, recently announced the launch of a program intended to educate Ontario's students about Indigenous treaties. Kelly Crawford, a citizen of M'Chigeeng First Nation, Waabizhishi Dodem (Marten Clan) is the author of the resource guide that will assist teachers in providing more in-depth explanations of treaties is. She currently resides outside of Sudbury, Ontario.

Changing the curriculum

The teacher resource guide titled *We Are All Treaty People* is for students in Grade 1 to Grade 8. Crawford, who is currently an instructor at Kenjgewin Teg Educational Institute located on Mnidoo Mnising (Manitoulin Island) and Faculty Liaison with Queen's University, asserts that this isn't the first change that has been made in the curriculum.

"[The] curriculum has changed over the years and there are many people doing great work in this area of First Nation, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) studies, however currently the concepts around treaty relationships are not part of everyday discourse," says Crawford.

The idea of learning about treaties may sound very technical to some, the fear of the complexities of legal jargon is off-putting for many -- especially when we stop to consider that this is for kids. However Crawford makes it clear that this about much more than the specifics of historical legal documents.

According to Crawford, a treaty or treaty relationship is not a distant memory or something to be archived in history. "We are talking about a living agreement that has a living connection. For example, students are taught cities and provinces, it is second nature for young students to know the city and province they live in, but what about the traditional territory? Or treaty area they live in? We are at a time when we need to be creative to ensure students are receiving this knowledge," Crawford explains.

Policy versus practice

The push for Ontario to move toward a more comprehensive means of educating students about Indigenous issues has been urged by many. In 2013, the organization [People for Education](#) stressed that Ontario school boards needed to revamp their curriculum.

"[We] are not doing enough to educate all of our students about the complex relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada, or about contemporary and historical First Nations, Métis and Inuit culture, perspectives, and experiences," warned Executive Director Annie Kidder in a statement.

However Crawford argues that the challenge does not necessarily rest in the policy-making process or in composing a curriculum engaging Indigenous perspectives, histories and contemporary issues. "It is a completely different challenge to deliver this in the classroom. We are failing our teachers by not supporting them with the proper tools, knowledge, experiences and resources in relation to First Nation, Métis and Inuit Studies," states Crawford.

Supporting our educators better

The *We Are All Treaty People* teacher resource aims to ensure that Ontario's students have a thorough understanding of the impact of treaties and treaty relationships

throughout the province; all while contributing to positive relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Supporting educators is a multi-faceted initiative requiring several resources. Crawford explains that the teacher's guide supports the use of the "We Are All Treaty People" book. The guide was composed after educators found that the book itself was difficult to use alone as a resource since it is packed full of material and as a result, is perhaps too overwhelming for an elementary classroom.

Crawford states that the guide is meant to break it down into more accessible pieces. "[The teacher's guide] includes a video, similar to a read-aloud, separated into chapters to make the material easier to navigate." She also acknowledges that a part of the difficulty rested in the anxiety educators faced about delivering the material in an accurate and respectful manner.

"There are various lessons connected to the Ontario curriculum which include relationship building teaching strategies and treaty teacher tips that inspire active learning while supporting the capacity of teachers in relation to treaty education," states Crawford.

Outside Ontario

Ontario is not the only province looking to better educate students -- especially non-Indigenous students -- about the specifics of treaties. Manitoba currently has a Treaty Education Initiative supported by the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba. Saskatchewan has a K-12 Treaty Kit supported by the Office of the Treaty Commissioner.

"It is my hope that Ontario will one day have a Treaty Relations Commission," Crawford continues, "Although we can certainly share best practices, I think it is important to remember that every treaty is unique and brings with it the perspectives from many."

The bigger picture

Crawford argues, "The earlier we start students in basic understandings the better off they will be in the long run."

With significant issues such as [violence against Indigenous women](#) and the institutional barriers to keeping not only Indigenous culture, but [people](#), alive currently framing Canadian political culture, education about treaties points to a broader narrative about further educating Canadians about the multiplicity of systemic issues Indigenous individuals face. The implementation of more comprehensive education surrounding Indigenous treaties may spur future generations to encourage more measures of governmental accountability, as well as thinking critically about other issues facing Indigenous individuals.

Ashley Splawinski is a student at the University of Toronto. Previously, Ashley worked as a producer and host of News Now on CHRY 105.5 FM covering Canadian social, political, and environmental issues. You can visit her personal blog www.lionpolitics.tumblr.com and follow her on twitter @asplawinski.

Direct Link: <http://rabble.ca/news/2015/06/ontario-wants-students-to-learn-about-indigenous-treaties>

TDSB approves plan for K-12 First Nations school



TDSB service vans and trucks sit idle in a parking lot on Wednesday, July 11, 2012. (Corey Baird/CTV Toronto)

[Kendra Mangione](#), CTVNews.ca Writer

Published Thursday, June 18, 2015 1:55PM EDT

A Toronto school board has given the go-ahead for a new school with a curriculum focused on Aboriginal education and traditions.

The Toronto District School Board approved the plan for a kindergarten to Grade 12 First Nations school during a meeting on Wednesday evening. The school will be located at the present site of Eastern Commerce Collegiate Institute, one of several schools slated for possible closure due to low enrollment.

The school is located at 16 Phin Ave., near Danforth and Donlands Avenues.

The board plans to convert the 85-year-old building into a First Nations school with a curriculum that values cultural traditions and history aimed at reversing the sense of alienation felt by some of Toronto's 7,000 Aboriginal students.

Students will study the Ontario curriculum, but also have the opportunity to learn hunting, for instance, and study First Nations literature.

The TDSB already runs an Aboriginal education program at the First Nations School at 935 Dundas St. E., near Broadview Avenue, that caters to students in kindergarten through Grade 8.

The new school has a projected enrollment of 600 students, according to the TDSB. It will be open to all Toronto residents, not just those of Aboriginal descent.

The board will next approach the federal and provincial governments for funding. It hopes to open the school by September 2016.

The decision to open the school comes on the heels of a report by the federal Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Among its [many recommendations](#), the report offered many that focus on education reform.

In its report, the commission called on government to develop an age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, treaties and Aboriginal people's historical contributions.

Direct Link: <http://toronto.ctvnews.ca/tdsb-approves-plan-for-k-12-first-nations-school-1.2429011>

Aboriginal Health

Arctic health conference offers new directions for future research

“We’re not alone with our health problems”

JANE GEORGE, June 12, 2015 – 3:30 pm



Lena Maria Nilsson, a Saami nutritionist from northern Sweden, came with a round, brown stone to the circumpolar health conference in Oulu, Finland to highlight the connection between culture and health. (PHOTO BY JANE GEORGE)



Inuit who want to become doctors face an uphill journey, says Dr. Madeleine Cole, a family physician at Iqaluit's Qikiqtani General Hospital in Iqaluit, at the ICCH in Oulu. Doctors are supposed to advocate for their patients' health — and she believes Inuit would be better advocates for their Inuit patients in Nunavut. They'd also provide a continuity of care and serve as role models in the community, she said in a June 10 presentation on "Indigenizing the Canadian Physician Workforce: A perspective from Nunavut." (PHOTO BY JANE GEORGE)



Three young Saami girls perform for participants in the International Congress on Circumpolar Health in Oulu, Finland, which lies at the southern edge of the Saami territory in northern Finland, Sweden, Norway and Russia. At the ICCH, indigenous health concerns were the subject of many research presentations. (PHOTO BY JANE GEORGE)



In a presentation to the ICCH, Shirley Tagalk from the Arviat Wellness Centre and the Qaujigiartiit Health Research centre explains how Arviat has tried to engage youth in health and help them become creative advocates for healthy living. (PHOTO BY JANE GEORGE)

OULU, FINLAND — The circumpolar world is linked as much by its common health challenges as by its Arctic geography.

That's what struck Nunavut Health Minister Paul Okalik as he prepared to head back from Finland to Canada June 12 at the end of the International Congress on Circumpolar Health.

"I learned that we're not alone with our health problems," said Okalik, who attended a variety of sessions on subjects like housing, food security and suicide during his week at the conference, which he called "important to attend."

Many subjects discussed during the five-day-long gathering touched on health issues of interest to people in Nunavut and Nunavik, such as diabetes prevention in relation to [Arctic berry consumption](#) and [marijuana use, contaminants and Arctic human health, potentially harmful genetic conditions](#) and [suicide](#).

Indigenous researchers were among those who presented at the conference, which included more than 200 participants — health experts, researchers and government officials like Okalik — from around the circumpolar world.

And they offered new ideas on ways to research and improve health throughout the polar regions.

Lena Maria Nilsson, a Saami nutritionist from northern Sweden, came with a round, brown stone to the conference in Oulu.

Why this stone? Because in the 1850s, a great-grandfather of hers threw a similar, but sacred, Saami stone into a nearby lake to show he was a good Christian.

"Since that day, our family has been afflicted with eye disease and visual impairment," Nilsson said.

The genetic factor HLA-B27 offers enhanced immunity to some common viral diseases, but also predisposes about one in 100 carriers to colitis, arthritis or to the severe eye condition that affects Saami — as well as other indigenous peoples including about 37 per cent of Inuit.

"Without getting into details, HLA-B27 carriers are [also] more sensitive to low grade inflammation in the gastro-intestinal system — a common risk factor for most of our metabolic diseases," she said.

Nilsson points to the transition away from traditional food and relaxing activities, as well as cultural stress as triggers in the development of health problems related to HLA-B27.

When her ancestor threw that stone into the lake, Saami culture was in the throes of a hard period of cultural assimilation, she said. The timing of his action was always linked in her family to increasing eye problems.

At the conference, Nilsson called for more research on these “auto-immune reactions to colonialism.”

“Many of the diseases which are health problems today have connections with lifestyle change and assimilation,” she said June 11 at the conference.

“This is not new knowledge — but hopefully this is a new way of reflecting upon a group of rheumatic diseases of relevance for the people of the circumpolar area — combining traditional knowledge with medical facts. “

Other presenters from Nunavut and Nunavik in Oulu, included

- Minnie Grey from the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services on the Circumpolar Inuit Health Strategy 2010-2014;
- Sharon Edmunds-Potvin from Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. on health research in Nunavut;
- Ceporah Mearns from the Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre on Nunavut’s Makimautiksat youth camps;
- Dr. Madeline Cole from the Qikiqtani General Hospital on how to bring more indigenous peoples into the health profession; and,
- Shirley Tagalik from the Arviat Wellness Centre and the Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre on how to engage youth in health.

The next circumpolar health conference is scheduled for August 2018 in Copenhagen.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674circumpolar_health_conference_offers_new_ideas_for_future_research/

Profile: A young aboriginal woman’s mental health struggles

[Anaïs Voski, Ottawa Citizen More from Anaïs Voski, Ottawa Citizen](#)

Published on: June 14, 2015

Last Updated: June 14, 2015 7:15 PM EDT

Jessica Dinovitzer is 21 and of Mohawk descent. She works in the Native Circle at the Youth Services Bureau. She is one of the 310 participants in a Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health study that produced startling findings, [reported by the Citizen last month](#), about aboriginal youth mental health in the Ottawa region. Reporter **Anaïs Voski** sat down with Dinovitzer to put a human face on the report.

Q: How did you come to participate in Wabano's survey on aboriginal youth mental health?

A: I come from a Mohawk background from my mother's side and I was born in Ottawa, so I am part of the more than 43,000 native people who live in the Champlain LHIN area. A couple of years ago I was seeking help because I had severe PTSD, depression, and anxiety due to sexual assault. I went through the Youth Services Bureau, the Minwaashin Lodge, the Sexual Assault Support Centre of Ottawa, and eventually ended up at the Wabano Centre, where everything just sort of fell into place. I think it's important to do and participate in such surveys so that these centres know how to help our native youth.

Q: Tell me a little more about yourself.

A: I was born in Ottawa in 1993 into a Mohawk-German-Irish-Scottish family. I'm native from my mother's side. From age four to seven I lived in foster care under the Children's Aid Society (CAS). I have five siblings, but ... I found them through Facebook the day I turned 18. Until the day I was adopted, I felt like nobody wanted me or cared about me, but then I remember the day my CAS worker came in. She pulled this little scrapbook out of her bag and all that it said on the front cover was, 'I want to be yours'. My soon-to-be mother made this little scrapbook for me of her, the dog, the house, and the family. It took them three hours to get me to sit back down again to turn the front page, because I was just so happy that finally someone wanted to love me. I was seven at the time. I was adopted into a Jewish family by a single mother and we lived near South Keys and I ended up going to Hillcrest High School.



Jessica Dinovitzer, 21, was born into a Mohawk-German-Irish-Scottish family in 1993 and was adopted into a Jewish family when she was seven.

Q: What do you know about your birth mother, who, as you said, was Mohawk?

A: I don't know much about her, but what I do know is that after she lost us she went into a downhill spiral and unfortunately passed away in 2009. I didn't really know her, but she still gave me life and without her I wouldn't be here. I don't know if she went to residential school or not. She never talked about it. But that's what the assimilation

program was meant to do in the first place, wasn't it? To lose that identity meant lost traditions and lost ways of life and lost languages. No matter what, some things will be lost, but if you force them to be, the loss becomes much more severely damaging.

Q: How did native teachings help you deal with your sexual assault and the trauma and depression caused by it?

A: Wabano's native teachings helped me not only connect better with myself, but with others as well. The fact that they used the methods of our teachings to help us heal and to reinforce our sense of community helped us connect better with each other, too. That's what the native community is; it's supporting each other's decisions to do what we need to do. As a group, we help each other heal and we give feedback to each other. It's just a safe place for us to go.

Q: How have the teachings you've learned translate into your work today?

A: I've been the youth co-ordinator at the YSB for about a year now. I never miss a day unless I'm sick. As a youth co-ordinator, I co-ordinate with the Wabano Centre and the Minwaashin Lodge, and we do beading, medicine bags, make banners for the Native Circle, and talk about what happens in a Pow Wow and in sweat lodges. We've also made moccasins before. It's a way to learn and heal together as a community and to pass on our traditional teachings to the next generation of native youth.

Direct Link: <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/profile-a-young-aboriginal-womans-mental-health-struggles>

First Nations health inequities an obstacle to reconciliation

Reconciliation means addressing inequities in Indigenous health including disparities in income, education, housing and more.



The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is calling on the federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal governments to acknowledge that the current dismal state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of Canadian government policies.

By: Jeff Reading Published on Sun Jun 14 2015

Contrary to the stereotypes, First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples of Canada are strong, resilient and fully capable of managing our own affairs. As far as the question of cultural genocide is concerned, we very much want to put it behind us. But that cannot occur without reconciliation.

When it comes to health and health care, we want to eliminate the profound inequities in health determinants, health status, and health service access that together ravages our urban, rural and remote communities, causing preventable disease, disability and premature death.

Reconciliation means addressing the socio-economic determinants of Indigenous health including disparities in income, education, employment, housing, infant mortality rates that are two to four times higher than the norm, child food insecurity, substance use, extreme poverty and social exclusion, which combined lead to higher prevalence rates for most diseases.

If the rationale for social justice and equity is not enough, then consider the economic impacts of the fact that Aboriginals are the fastest growing population in Canada with the worst health status. The costs of not implementing health and social interventions, which we know will work, is the continuation of a downward spiral of ill health and the costs associated with avoidable treatments, often performed many miles away from loved ones where the patient is isolated from family and community, frightened and alone. This situation can and must change.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is calling on the federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal governments to acknowledge that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of Canadian government policies, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law, constitutional law and under the treaties.

The TRC made a number of health recommendations, including identifying and analyzing the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, funding Aboriginal healing centres and providing cultural competency training for all health care professionals.

[These recommendations](#), among all 94 of those put forth by the TRC, signal a tremendous paradigm shift in Aboriginal health. Now we need to put these ideas into action. An Indigenous governing body to implement these recommendations in an integrated way is crucial.

An Ontario Indigenous Peoples' Health Authority is one option that could completely change the way we approach Aboriginal health care. The British Columbia Tripartite Agreement on First Nation Health Governance is a model that could be expanded to Ontario and across Canada. In this agreement, B.C.'s First Nations Health Authority implemented "community-driven — (first)-nation-based" programs that are preventing illness, improving care and saving tax dollars through proven strategies that are designed by and for Aboriginal Peoples.

The B.C. model would certainly need to be adapted for an Ontario context, but some of their early successes in primary care service coordination and eHealth may be easily translated.

The [Waakebiness-Bryce Institute for Indigenous Health](#) based at the University of Toronto could convene a forum for dialogue among Indigenous community leaders and advocates, academics and policy-makers to develop innovative ways to implement the TRC's recommendations.

As the first privately endowed Indigenous health institute in the world, it can help facilitate a national summit on reconciliation in health care services. In Ontario, a process between First Nations, Métis, Inuit, federal and provincial governments could be developed that takes inspiration from the B.C. model, but also respects regional differences and interests.

Reconciliation is a journey, taken one step at a time as demonstrated by the courageous survivors of residential schools who shared their stories with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Establishing an Ontario Indigenous Peoples' Health Authority connected to a Canadian network would not only save taxpayers a whole lot of money, it would represent a huge step toward reconciliation, in addition to being a lasting legacy to any government in power.

Prof. Jeff Reading is Mohawk from Tyendinaga First Nation in Ontario and Interim Director of the Waakebiness-Bryce Institute for Indigenous Health at the University of Toronto's Dalla Lana School of Public Health.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2015/06/14/first-nations-health-inequities-an-obstacle-to-reconciliation.html>

Alberta First Nations have 70 per cent higher risk of stillborn births: study

Pre-existing diabetes appears to be partly to blame in Alberta, and better management of diabetes during pregnancy in First Nations

women would lessen the risk of stillbirths, lead researcher says. First Nations women also tend to attend prenatal checkups less often.

By: Chinta Puxley The Canadian Press, Published on Tue Jun 16 2015

A study has found Alberta First Nations are at a much higher risk of stillborn births, due in part to pre-existing diabetes and lack of prenatal care.

Researchers from the University of Alberta examined more than 425,000 births in Alberta from 2000 to 2009. Author Richard Oster, from the university's faculty of medicine and dentistry, said the risk of stillborn births was 70 per cent higher for First Nations women compared with non-aboriginal mothers.

"Although the prevalence of stillbirth has remained stable in Alberta over 10 years, it remains persistently higher in First Nations pregnancies than in the general population," said the study, published in the February issue of the Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada.

The rate of stillborn births has remained steady in the last decade even as they've been falling in other high-income countries, he said.

"It's good news that they're not increasing — we don't want more stillbirths — but, of course, we'd like to see them going down," Oster said.

The findings echo studies from Quebec and Manitoba, which found infant mortality and stillborn births are higher among First Nations and Inuit people compared with the rest of the Canadian population.

A Statistics Canada study, released in February, found Inuit and First Nations in Quebec are at much greater risk of stillborn births and infant deaths compared with the rest of the province. The study found infant mortality was greater on reserves in southern Quebec even compared with non-aboriginal communities that were isolated and socio-economically disadvantaged.

Pre-existing diabetes appears to be partly to blame in Alberta, Oster said.

"Moms that had either Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes during their pregnancy had a much higher chance of having a stillbirth.

"If we can better manage diabetes during pregnancy in First Nations women, we could lessen the risk of stillbirths."

First Nations women also tend to attend prenatal checkups less frequently, he said. This seems to stem from a historical mistrust of doctors, as well as from other factors that include lack of transportation and child care.

First Nations women could perhaps be encouraged to seek prenatal care if the relationship were less paternalistic and more patient-centred, Oster suggested.

“It’s a level playing field where the patient has some control as well. We find that works better, not just for aboriginal people, but for a lot of people.

“It reduces that fear.”

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/06/16/alberta-first-nations-have-70-per-cent-higher-risk-of-stillborn-births-study.html>

Trevor Hancock: Resilience and the health of First Nations

Trevor Hancock / Times Colonist
June 17, 2015 12:51 AM

June 21 is National Aboriginal Day, so this is a suitable time to reflect on the massive harm that has been done to the health of aboriginal people in Canada — and around the world, for that matter. Canada’s treatment of aboriginal people is a national disgrace, as the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has just made abundantly clear.

But it is important to understand that there is good news, in the astonishing strength and resilience that aboriginal people have displayed.

In at least some aboriginal communities, we are witnessing slow but steady improvements in health and in control over their own health.

To understand what has happened to the health of aboriginal people, we first need to understand they had been here thousands of years before Europeans showed up — which in the case of B.C. was just over a couple of hundred years ago — and dispossessed them.

Then, having taken their land, we tried to suppress their culture — what the commission rightly has characterized as cultural genocide. Some of that was deliberate — the outrages of the residential-school system are a prime example — but some was not. With the Europeans came infectious diseases to which aboriginal people had no prior exposure and thus no resistance — smallpox, measles, influenza, TB and others — so they died in droves.

For example, about 90 per cent of the aboriginal population of Haida Gwaii died in the period after contact, which began in the late 18th century. That level of loss is culturally devastating; communities lose their elders and much of their traditional knowledge, their rituals, their knowledge of the land and how to live with it.

The result of the loss of land and culture has been horrific. The health status of aboriginal people in B.C. has been well documented by the provincial health officer.

In a 2012 report, Dr. Perry Kendall noted that overall life expectancy in the 2006-10 period for Status Indians — the technical term for First Nations people who are recognized by the federal government — was 6.4 years less than for other B.C. residents. However, the gap was slightly smaller than in the 1993-97 period, when it was 7.7 years.

Small wonder that when ranked by the UN Human Development Index, in which Canada always scores very well, First Nations people ranked 63rd in the world.

My colleague Charlotte Loppie, a professor in the School of Public Health and Social Policy and director of the Centre for Aboriginal Health Research at the University of Victoria, has written on these issues.

One study, written with Fred Wien in 2009, reported not only on the inequalities in health status experienced by aboriginal people in Canada, but on the inequalities in access to those things that help make people healthy. Among other things, they noted poor-quality education and housing, low levels of employment and income, and inadequate access to health care. But they also identified loss of culture, language and land, as well as systemic problems such as colonialism, racism and structural barriers to self-determination.

This last factor is illustrated in a study by Michael Chandler and Christopher Lalonde at the University of British Columbia, who found that the more First Nations communities in B.C. had control over systems such as education, policing and health, the lower the rate of youth suicide.

In light of their findings, the recent creation of the First Nations Health Authority in B.C. is an exciting development that will help First Nations in the further extension of their self-determination, which in itself is good for health.

In the second study, *Roots of Resilience*, released in 2013, Loppie documented several wonderful examples of aboriginal communities across Canada that have “successfully pursued greater self-determination as an approach to target the structural causes of inequity.”

If we are to continue to see an improvement in the health of aboriginal people in Canada, we need to go beyond a simplistic focus on improving lifestyle and health-care services and tackle the fundamental roots of inequality.

We need to rectify the appalling legacies of colonialism and racism, cultural suppression and dispossession, and we need to support aboriginal people in re-asserting their self-determination, taking pride in their rich history and traditions and in their strength and resilience.

Dr. Trevor Hancock is a professor and senior scholar at the University of Victoria's school of public health and social policy.

See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/opinion/columnists/trevor-hancock-resilience-and-the-health-of-first-nations-1.1970665#sthash.CHZzQBnJ.dpuf>

Aboriginal Identity & Representation

Media must do better on Aboriginal issues: Public Editor

One word best applies overall to media coverage of Aboriginal issues: Failure.



The Mohawk Institute, in Brantford, Ont., was an “Indian Residential School” notoriously known as the “mush hole” for its substandard, mushy food.

By: [Kathy English](#) Public Editor, Published on Fri Jun 12 2015

Look at any study of [Canadian media coverage of Aboriginal Peoples](#) and you will see the many words that indict journalists: ignorance, indifference, denial, colonialism, ethnocentrism, cultural chauvinism, bias, discrimination, racism.

While we could debate these labels, and the attitudes and intent they assume — and certainly some individual journalists deserve praise for exemplary coverage — it is hard to deny that one word best applies overall to media coverage of Aboriginal issues throughout our history: Failure.

As last week's [summary of the final report of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#) tells us, Canadian journalists have themselves acknowledged our failings in reporting on indigenous peoples. The report, which documents the history and legacy of the disgrace of Canada's residential schools, cites a 1993 submission to the [Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples](#) by the [Canadian Association of Journalists](#). It stated:

“The country’s large newspapers, TV and radio news shows often contain misinformation, sweeping generalizations and galling stereotypes about Natives and Native affairs The result is that most Canadians have little real knowledge of the country’s Native peoples or the issues that affect them.”

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission found little change in Canadian media coverage in the two decades since, concluding that “this historical pattern persists.

“Media coverage of Aboriginal issues remains problematic; social media and online commentary are often inflammatory and racist in nature.”

The report contends that the media’s “role and responsibility” in reconciliation requires journalists to be well-informed about the history of Canada’s Aboriginal Peoples. It calls for Canadian journalism programs to require education on the history of Aboriginal Peoples, including the legacy and “ethical dimensions” of residential schools.

I will not and cannot dispute any of the commission’s findings regarding Canadian journalists and media coverage of Aboriginal issues, most especially the shame of residential schools, which the commission deems “cultural genocide.”

This feels personal to me. I majored in Canadian history at university and while I learned something of Aboriginal issues, I don’t recall ever learning about residential schools. Most shamefully, I grew up in Brantford, Ont. And never understood that our local [Mohawk Institute](#) was an “Indian Residential School” notoriously known as the “mush hole” for its substandard, mushy food.

It is only now, as I delve deeper into this Canadian history, and read the testimonies of survivors of residential schools that I have learned that 15,000 First Nations children went through the Mohawk Institute, robbed of their First Nations identities and given substandard educations. I learned that too many of these children were victims of physical and sexual abuse, and that through the many years the school operated, some children simply disappeared, never to be seen by their families again. How did I grow up so close to this and not know about it?

In seeking truth and reconciliation, looking back has its purpose and value. But as the commission’s 94 recommendations make clear, the actions to be taken to right the legacy of past injustice are now critical.

The call to action to Canadian journalists is clear: The media has a role and responsibility in reporting on and reflecting the realities of Aboriginal issues and in creating greater understanding for all Canadians of this shared history and its continuing legacy.

To that end, the most encouraging initiative I am aware of has been undertaken by [Journalists for Human Rights, a Canadian media development organization](#) that has launched a program to train and mentor Aboriginal journalists in Northern Ontario so that

they can better tell their own stories, both within their own communities and throughout Canada in mainstream media.

The program also provides training to non-Aboriginal journalists so that they can cover Aboriginal issues with greater context and sensitivity. JHR has also launched an Indigenous Reporters Program to provide scholarships and internship opportunities to young, Indigenous students seeking to become journalists.

A JHR report from last summer entitled, “[Buried Voices: Media Coverage of Aboriginal Issues in Ontario](#)” makes clear the need to improve reporting on indigenous issues. It found the Aboriginal population widely under-represented in mainstream media and concluded the little coverage done was largely negative in tone and focused on conflict, protests and “noise.” Media coverage of the important residential schools issue was almost non-existent.

Among those who provided analysis for JHR’s report on “buried voices” was [Cindy Blackstock, executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada](#) and an associate professor at the University of Alberta. Blackstock decried the minimal media coverage of residential schools and expressed hope that the Canadian media will do a better job in telling the truth and reconciliation story.

“Journalists have a historic opportunity to set the bedrock of truth telling from which reconciliation and the full realization of Canadian values can grow,” she wrote. “Let’s hope they don’t miss it.”

Direct Link: http://www.thestar.com/opinion/public_editor/2015/06/12/media-must-do-better-on-aboriginal-issues-public-editor.html

A push for First Nations disability awareness

By Henrytye Glazebrook, The Starphoenix June 16, 2015

Clara Nashacappo doesn’t believe people when they refer to her as a troublemaker. As the chair for Saskatchewan First Nations Disability Awareness Day, she says her ongoing push for better treatment of aboriginal people with disabilities – which she has aimed squarely at aboriginal and non-aboriginal leaders – has resulted in some critics painting her as a rogue.

“People call me a troublemaker. I don’t think I am. I’m voicing for the people,” Nashacappo said.

Saskatchewan First Nations Disability Awareness Day, in its fourth year, is an annual event aimed at increasing public and leadership recognition of the need for greater support for disabled members of the Aboriginal community.

According to Nashacappo, who has used a wheelchair all her life due to a polio infection, disabled people are frequently looked at as “pitiful” on reserves and are in great need of programs and funding to help them get educated, find work placement and generally thrive in life.

“What is wrong? Why are we not getting the help? What do we need to do to get that help and bring awareness for disabilities? We have to start somewhere,” she said.

Kim Jonathan, interim chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, spoke publicly on Monday about the benefits of the event.

Referring to her own experiences growing up with a brother who was hearing impaired, she said the day was an opportunity to recognize the barriers faced by people with disabilities and to celebrate the people working to eradicate those hurdles.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/health/push+First+Nations+disability+awareness/11140051/story.html>

CBC Vancouver Inspiration Series highlights aboriginal women leaders

Dream Makers panelists talked about their motivations, challenges and how to move forward

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 16, 2015 8:06 AM PT Last Updated: Jun 16, 2015 12:39 PM PT

CBC Vancouver presented *CBC Vancouver Inspiration Series: Dream Makers*, a panel event that highlights successful aboriginal women and celebrates the unique experiences that have led them to become leaders in the community.

The panel discussion Tuesday morning, moderated by CBC's Duncan McCue and hosted by Lisa Charleyboy, featured four female leaders who shared their stories of how they overcame challenges to achieve success.

The speakers were:

- Melanie Mark, a community advocate
- Dorothy Grant, an acclaimed artist and fashion designer

- Laurie Sterritt, the director of Aboriginal Employment, Education and Procurement at B.C. Hydro
- Dr. Gwen Point, the Chancellor of the University of the Fraser Valley

Here are some highlights from the event.

When you get out of bed in the morning, what motivates you?



Melanie Mark, a community advocate, experienced much adversity growing up, but she got over the anger by replacing it with passion. (CBC)

Melanie: The resilience in our community, and knowing that we've stood tall despite some of our barriers, but knowing that there's a lot of work to do. So a long list of activities that need to get done, and always being reminded by my daughters each and everyday that even though we're tired, even though you just want to sleep in and hit snooze one more time, you got to dig deep and do the important work.

We're all in the middle of a big city here, running big city lives. How do you stay in touch with culture here in the city?



Gwen Pointe says in touch with her aboriginal heritage by incorporating cultural customs and practices into her daily life. (CBC)

Gwen: There's no question that it is a part of who you are, and I make it a part of who I am. I tell people I'm First Nations, whether I'm dressed in my traditional regalia or I'm dressed in street clothes. I make it a part of my day. I go from a longhouse to my job, go from my home to a sweat lodge. And I've had the privilege, of course, of teaching about First Nations. When I ask the elders, how do you teach about a longhouse, how do I teach about a cedar tree? They told me, don't talk about it, do it. So education — I bring my students to a longhouse. I make it a part of my everyday.

How, as indigenous women, do you balance the responsibility to your community versus being an individual and individual success?



Dorothy Grant says the support of her people from the Haida Nation has helped shape her success in art and fashion design. (CBC)

Dorothy: I think it's by example, In 1989, I did my first fashion show in Hotel Vancouver and it received incredible response. About three weeks later, I took that same show to Skidegate and I asked young people and elders to be my models. We did the very same show, but with different models. My community just embraced it and this was very early on. I've kept that connection with my people and that's been very important for me, that they, in the beginning, endorsed what I was doing because nobody at the time was doing anything like this, so it was really stepping out on the ledge. To have their support was a major thing for me. Each sort of success that I've had, I feel like my community's been behind me.

I want to talk about the barriers that you guys have all faced as indigenous women. Was there ever a turning point moment for you?

Melanie: Child welfare had direct impact on my family. My brother grew up in foster care and my mom struggled with addiction. So I would have to say I brought empathy to work. But I also took an approach that I'm going to learn this system, I'm going to be an expert in this system so I can fight the system. And it's helped a lot of families, and refueling that anger with passion. Just rechannelling the energy. The early days were hard and angry, and the glass was really empty. There wasn't a lot to look forward to.



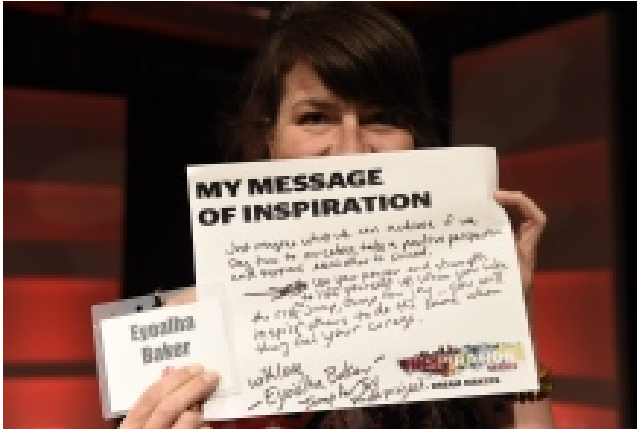
Laurie Sterritt says finding people who are willing to support her is the key to her successful career. (CBC)

Laurie: My career has been fairly colourful, but I think the major turning point for me was I had a real severe fear of failure when it came to post-secondary school, which I think is quite common in aboriginal communities. I met an administrator at UBC who believed in me, and he coached me along, and he kept saying, "You can do it, you can do it." Up until then I had registered and dropped out of several calculus and statistics courses. Once he had convinced me I could do it, I believed in it and I passed both of those courses with flying colours and then entered the commerce program at UBC. I think, at the time, I was the only female aboriginal person in the school.

It's so important that we have some mainstream coverage of [murder and missing indigenous women], but I do wonder, is it also a challenge for indigenous women when that image of women as victims is so often [in the] media?

Melanie: I think the media has a responsibility to tell the story and to do truth-telling about the facts. Unfortunately, we have a lot of vignettes and it's about selling, sometimes, the story, without honouring. We're talking about women's lives. We're talking about people having humanity and dignity, so I think the media has responsibility to shape some of that narrative. I think the other piece is this isn't about complaining and protesting. This is about calling on justice.

What advice would you give your 10-year-old self about how to go forward?



Audience attending CBC Vancouver Inspiration Series: Dream Makers jot down their messages of inspiration. (CBC)

Laurie: My 10-year-old self probably needed to hear that being human means that you make mistakes, you're flawed, but I think there should be more room for forgiveness, self-forgiveness. Believe in yourself and if you don't have the support you need in your life, go out and find it. I've found in my career path that there's always been somebody willing to jump in and help, and just even lift the veil, whatever the mystery is around the next corner of my journey.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/cbc-vancouver-inspiration-series-highlights-aboriginal-women-leaders-1.3115322>

Inuktitut iPhone, iPad keyboards help strengthen Inuit language

Pirurvik Centre teams up with Nunavut government to get more people using syllabics online

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 17, 2015 12:47 PM CT Last Updated: Jun 17, 2015 12:48 PM CT

It's suddenly a whole lot easier for Inuit to share their thoughts — in their language — in Facebook posts and text messages.

The Government of Nunavut and the Pirurvik Centre, a non-government organization focused on keeping Inuit culture alive, have launched a new set of Inuit-language keyboards for Apple products, including iPhones and iPads.

"We hope [the keyboards, known in Inuktitut as Naqittauttit] will help improve and facilitate the greater use of our language on popular mobile phones and tablets," said Minister of Languages George Kuksuk in a news release.

People who use Microsoft have been able to type in Inuktitut syllabics for a decade, but this technology includes a new feature.



The Nunavut government and the Pirurvik Centre have launched Naqittauttit, a set of Inuit-language keyboards. (Submitted by the Pirurvik Centre)

Now Inuit-language speakers can type using Roman orthography and have their message appear in syllabics, provided the spelling is correct.

Pirurvik's president, Leena Evic, says the ability to use syllabics on Apple devices will make Inuit languages more visible on social media.

Keeping Inuit languages alive in the digital age, and with a dwindling number of speakers, has been a hot topic in the territory this year.

In March, Minister of Education Paul Quassa sparked debate among residents, when he announced that the government is looking at the possibility of no longer [teaching syllabics](#) in Nunavut schools, but rather, switching to the use of Roman orthography.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuktitut-iphone-ipad-keyboards-help-strengthen-inuit-language-1.3117261>

SSI Micro teams up with Inuit org on new radio service

Proponents hope pilot project grows into Nunavut-wide Inuit-language FM service

JIM BELL, June 18, 2015 - 6:05 am



And SSI Micro communications site in Nunavut, showing a satellite dish and wireless antenna. The company has teamed up with the Kitikmeot Inuit Association to start a pilot project in Kugluktuk and Cambridge Bay that will offer Inuit-language programming on FM radio. (PHOTO COURTESY OF SSI MICRO)

Through a marriage of open source software, satellite technology and FM radio, the Kitikmeot Inuit Association and SSI Micro have come up with a new way to put the Inuit language on the airwaves.

If all goes as planned, by mid-2016, Kugluktuk and Cambridge Bay residents will get a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week FM radio service that includes a daily Inuit language radio program aimed at revitalizing Inuinnaqtun.

And they also hope that after the first small seed germinates, it will one day grow into a new Nunavut-wide radio network.

“The more communities that are involved, the more content that can be shared on the network itself. You have elements that would be of interest strictly to Cambridge Bay and there may be elements that would be of interest to communities all across Nunavut,” said Dean Proctor, SSI Micro’s chief development officer.

“The more communities that are on there, the broader the scope and appeal of the content itself,” Proctor said.

By June 2016, after they receive the necessary licences and permits from the CRTC and Industry Canada, they hope to start off with a two-year pilot project in Kugluktuk and Cambridge Bay.

SSI Micro, through its offices in Kanata, Ont., and Yellowknife, already offers broadband satellite-based internet in Nunavut through its Qiniq brand and in the Northwest Territories through Airware.

Its relationship with the KIA dates to 1998, when SSI Micro worked with the Inuit organization to bring a satellite-based internet service to the Kitikmeot region’s five communities.

The radio idea emerged from discussions between SSI Micro's president, Jeff Phillip, KIA officials, and Rob Hopkins of Tagish, Yukon, who has developed an open source, web-based software system called OpenBroadcaster.

The OpenBroadcaster software can be used to manage radio and video broadcasts and allows live-to-air and automated programming.

"The KIA was interested in advancing and promoting the Inuit oral culture. So it was a bit of a coming together of Jeff's desire to not only move into radio, because we can leverage our satellite facilities, and KIA's desire to work on a pilot project to see how this might work in a couple of key communities," Proctor said.

"Rob played a pretty big role in this as well. He developed OpenBroadcaster, which is the software foundation for this project," said Chris Fraser, an SSI Micro development officer.

"The three groups began these conversations about a radio network for the Kitikmeot, one thing led to another, and here we are," Fraser said.

The OpenBroadcaster web interface can allow any authorized person to put together radio shows and music playlists from libraries of pre-recorded content.

It can also be used to plug in public service announcements and paid advertisements, or provide for live programming.

The KIA will use it to manage its own daily Inuit-language time slot.

But other participants, such as volunteers, community radio societies and hamlets, may be able to use the software to gain access to their own community access time slots.

"The concept of a studio changes with advances in technology. Studios become really virtual. You could broadcast from a smartphone or a computer, rather than from the four walls and glass windows of a studio," Proctor said.

SSI is capable of managing the system remotely from its satellite teleport in Kanata, Proctor said.

And streaming music programs, all of which must conform to CRTC Canadian content regulations, can be easily assembled through a drag-and-drop interface.

"Music selections must adhere to any CRTC direction on Canadian content, but it is expected that programming will generally feature local performers, Inuit performers from the circumpolar north, as well as Canadian aboriginal music," a background document says.

“Such content would be rotated in a mix that also includes country, rock and hip hop and other music genres popular in the Kitikmeot region.”

In Kugluktuk and Cambridge Bay, SSI Micro will install their own low-power FM antennas, less than 50 watts each, with reception available within a 10-kilometre radius around each community.

In the future, the system could be adapted to integrate community video and cable TV, as well as emergency announcements and other communications.

Their next step is to file applications with the CRTC this summer or fall and to obtain technical permissions from Industry Canada.

“Without trying to pre-determine the regulator’s decisions, we’d like to think we can get ability to be up and running about a year from now,” Proctor said.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674ssi_micro_teams_up_with_inuit_org_on_new_radio_service/

School board to ask First Nations’ opinion on Mohawk moniker

By Peggy Revell on June 17, 2015.

SD 76 will be contacting Mohawk First Nations to discuss the use of their name as the mascot for Medicine Hat High School.

“In order to honour our shared heritage as Canadians, the board is directing administration to share the rationale and positive tradition in which the Mohawk name is used by MHHS with the Canadian Mohawk Nations of Kahnawà:ke and Akwesasne,” trustee Deborah Forbes said, reading the motion at Tuesday’s school division meeting. “... Our school district is going to reach out for input in the development of background information in order to assist with honouring and celebrating the Mohawk name.”

The board’s decision comes after a MHHS student began a petition calling for the school to abandon the use of the name. Numerous other schools across Canada and the U.S. have stopped using aboriginal names and imagery for mascots and logos due to objections from First Nations people.

At this point the petition to remove the name has not been submitted to the district, said board chair Terry Riley following the meeting, while a counter petition with 1,500 names calling for the name to remain has been submitted.

“I think there was a collective interest in trying to be sure that we respected the cultural heritage of the Mohawk and native people in general, but I don’t think there was a majority feeling that we would do away with the 60-year tradition here,” said Riley on the board’s direction. “But we wanted to find a way to convey to the First Nations involved how respectful we are of the name and the manner in which it is used here.”

For example, Riley pointed to the agenda book all MHHS students receive each year, where the Mohawk logo is surrounded by positive messages.

With the input of the Mohawk First Nations, this could be expanded, said Riley—for example, with renovations of MHHS soon to be underway it could include incorporating a storyboard about all the Mohawk First Nations to show the contributions that they have made to Canada.

“There may be openings of other kinds of opportunities,” he said, and this depends on what the response is.

There is no plan yet if the Kahnawà:ke and Akwesasne nations say the don’t want the Mohawk name to be used.

“We’ll cross that bridge when we get there, until we get such feedback,” said Riley.

Direct Link: <http://medicinehatnews.com/news/local-news/2015/06/17/school-board-to-ask-first-nations-opinion-on-mohawk-moniker/>

Winnipeg library returns ‘Tintin’ to shelves — in the adult section

by [Brigid Alverson](#) | June 18, 2015 @ 7:43 AM



The Winnipeg Public Library is [returning Herge's *Tintin in America* to its shelves](#) — but in the adult graphic novel section, *not* the children's area.

The book was [pulled for review in March](#) following news that [the Chapters bookstore in Winnipeg had briefly removed copies from its shelves](#) due to a complaint about the portrayal of Native Americans. An email sent to all library branches at that time reveals *Tintin in America* wasn't supposed to be on the shelves in the first place.

“The decision to withdraw this title was originally made in 2006 after several patron complaints about the content being offensive,” the email stated. “The complaints were reviewed by the Youth Services Librarians at the time and the decision was made to remove it from the public collections based on overtly stereotypical and racist depictions of indigenous people.”

As a result of the 2006 review, both *Tintin in America* and *Tintin in the Congo* were moved to a special research collection. That collection was removed in 2013, but the book was re-ordered and returned to the general collection last year — “in error,” according to a library spokesperson. This week's decision restores the book to general circulation, but to the adult collection, where it will be available to adult readers who want to see it for themselves or “carry on discussions with their children or others.”

In the book, serialized from September 1931 to October 1932, Tintin pursues a gangster from Chicago to a western town, “Redskin City,” where they are held captive by members of the Blackfoot tribe. In March, First Nations educator Tasha Spillett [asked Chapters to stop selling the book](#), saying “the impact of racist images and perpetuating harmful narratives.” Chapters withdrew the book but quickly returned it to store shelves after determining it didn't violate company policy, which states only three reasons why a book can be removed: child pornography, instructions on how to build weapons of mass destruction, or “anything written with the sole intent of inciting society toward the annihilation of one group.”

University of Manitoba professor Niigaan Sinclair, who teaches a course on graphic novels, said that while the book should not be banned, it isn't a book that children should read before they are provided with the proper context.

“The problem is when you show Indians carrying weapons coming out of the 15th, 16th centuries always invested in violence, deficiency, and loss, then [children] think that is what First Nations culture is,” he told CBC News. “When they see a First Nations person riding the bus, going to a job, they can't conceive the reconcilability of those two things.”

Direct Link: <http://robot6.comicbookresources.com/2015/06/winnipeg-library-returns-tintin-to-shelves-in-the-adult-section/>

Aboriginal Inequality & Poverty

Canadian First Nations becoming less prosperous, report says

GLORIA GALLOWAY

OTTAWA — The Globe and Mail

Published Tuesday, Jun. 16, 2015 7:36PM EDT

Last updated Wednesday, Jun. 17, 2015 12:52AM EDT

Three years after an economic development board set a decade-long goal of closing the prosperity gap between aboriginal people and the rest of Canada, its new report says key indicators are moving in the wrong direction.

The Aboriginal Progress Report, a sequel to a benchmark study completed in 2012 by the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board, finds First Nations people on reserves drifting further behind non-aboriginal Canadians.

The new report, which will be released Wednesday, uses Statistics Canada census data to compare the progress of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people between 2006 and 2011 – the latest census – on core economic issues such as employment and income and underlying issues such as education and living conditions.

Inuit and Métis people showed some improvements in employment rates, though the Inuit lost ground to other Canadians when it came to postsecondary completion rates and the proportion of their homes in need of major repair.

But for First Nations people living on reserves, the gap widened with the rest of Canada in terms of employment, reliance on government transfers, college and university completion rates and housing.

Clarence Louie, the Chief of the Osoyoos Indian Band in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley and the chair of the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board, says the ability of Canada's aboriginal people to support themselves has been severely reduced over the centuries by government land grabs and experiences such as the residential schools.

But "I am telling First Nations we have to make the economy the No. 1 issue, just like non-native people do. Non-native people don't stand for double-digit unemployment. Neither should we," Mr. Louie said in a telephone interview. "The original treaty relationship in this country was a business relationship. That's what I want to get back to."

One of the largest barriers to aboriginal economic development is the “outdated spending formula” used by the federal government to pay for aboriginal programming, he said, with 96 to 98 per cent of that money going to social spending and only a small fraction available for economic development.

“The government will fund every First Nation for a full-time welfare worker. They will fund every First Nation for a full-time drug and alcohol counselor. But they won’t fund First Nations for a full-time economic development officer,” Mr. Louie said.

The federal government, he said, considers economic development for aboriginal communities to be discretionary. “But I don’t know which town, city or province would call their economy discretionary. White people don’t call their economy discretionary.... We want economic development funding to be non-discretionary. That means it’s a focus, it’s a priority.”

During the years covered by the report, which included a major recession, the national employment rate fell from 62.7 per cent to 61.2 per cent, but for First Nations on reserve it fell from 39 per cent to 35.4 per cent.

The gap in income levels between residents of reserves and the rest of Canada actually narrowed slightly between 2006 and 2011 – but remains wider than it was in 2000. A higher percentage of both groups completed high school, but the gap remained about the same, with only 44.1 per cent of on-reserve students graduating. And the gap in dwellings needing major repairs actually narrowed slightly but remained six times higher for First Nations on reserves.

The board makes a number of broad recommendations for improvement, calling for a stronger effort to improve educational outcomes and for the creation of a federal agenda that sets closing the gaps as a priority. It says the government should support aboriginal businesses with capital and expertise and provide seed money for investment in economic opportunities in aboriginal communities.

“Are there going to be some communities where economic development is tough or really challenging?” Mr. Louie asked. “Well of course there will be. But then why can’t we focus on getting 50 per cent of First Nations people on that economic horse? That will go a long way and the First Nations stats will get marginally better in a decade.”

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/canadian-first-nations-becoming-less-prosperous-report-says/article24990367/>

Samson Cree breaks ground on housing project

Christina Martens/Wetaskiwin Times

Wednesday, June 17, 2015 1:13:56 MDT PM



Samson Cree Nation Acting Chief Clayton Bruno and Council member Glenda Swampy, centre, were joined by Housing Committee staff, left, and non-elected committee members, right, for a sod turning ceremony June 12 at the Jim Omeasoo Cultural Centre in Maskwacis to mark the beginning of a multi-faceted housing project in the community.

When a person has a home, the ripples can be felt throughout a community and for the first time in 13 years, 17 families will have new houses to call homes on the Samson Cree Nation.

“Today is a very exciting day for Samson Cree Nation,” said Acting Chief Clayton Bruno.

On June 12, Bruno was joined by Council members, Samson Cree Housing staff and non-elected committee members for a sod turning ceremony to mark the beginning of a new housing project that will include other community revitalization programs.

“We always talk about change in our community,” he said. “We talk about housing and instead of continuing to repair the old houses, which is just a band aid, we’re going to build new ones.”

Under the new housing project, 17 houses will be built and be ready to move into in September 2015.

What makes this project different is also the process by which people and families are selected. Bruno said the application process is quite stringent and applicants are being screened on a point-based system. In addition, selected applicants will pay a nominal monthly fee to live in the home. When they move out, money will be returned to them minus repair costs.

Having the fund will enable the building program to become self-sustaining.

They will also participate in a mandatory home maintenance program and be told what their responsibilities as residents are.

“If you pay into something you have an interest in keeping it up,” said Bruno.

The Housing Committee is currently screening 350 applications.

“Not everyone is going to get a home,” said Council member Glenda Swampy, “and for that I am sorry but it is a fair process we’re using. We’re not just saying I want this person to have a unit so they’ll get one.”

From there, the goal is to build 25 houses a year in the coming years, including an Elder’s Village, duplexes, handicapped housing; housing for single individuals and a project to turn a commercial building in the community into an apartment complex as well as repairing, renovating and mould remediation in some of the 40-year-old units in the community.

The Housing Committee will be working with Habitat for Humanity to build five homes with a plan to have 20 built in the next two to five years, said Bruno.

“It’s good what’s happening today,” said Elder Cecil Crier. “People are homeless.”

Wanda Baptiste, senior manager of Community Development said it’s been a long, sometimes rough road to get to Friday’s ground breaking event, but “it’s something we can be proud.”

“We’re trying to address the homelessness and overcrowding in our nation,” she said.

The homes will be built using local labour, thus providing jobs in the community, and keeping costs down said Bruno.

There are also plans to upgrade the community’s water and waste water system and turn the community dumps into proper transfer stations, said Baptiste as well as address road and other infrastructure concerns.

“We’ve got a lot of plans moving forward.”

“It’s been a long time coming,” agreed Council member Johnathon Dion. “It sure speaks volumes today to be where we’re at to build 17 houses. When we work together, good things happen.”

As housing is the predominant issue in most Aboriginal communities, Bruno said it’s hoped an ongoing building project will see the return of many people who left the community.

“Being able to provide homes for our nation’s members enables us to bring them home,” he said.

Direct Link: <http://www.wetaskiwintimes.com/2015/06/17/samson-cree-breaks-ground-on-housing-project>

Government stumped as report shows aboriginal wage gap widening, unemployment growing

[Douglas Quan](#) | June 17, 2015 9:09 PM ET



Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt answers a question during question period in the House of Commons.

The federal government touted a number of initiatives Wednesday for improving First Nations' well-being but could not explain why a new report showed the prosperity gap between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people was widening in some cases.

The report, released by the federally appointed National Aboriginal Economic Development Board, found that First Nations living on reserves had shown the least improvement.

Relying on 2006 and 2011 census data, the report found the non-aboriginal employment rate went from 62.7 per cent to 61.2 per cent. For First Nations living on reserves, it dropped from 39 per cent to 35.4 per cent.

Large disparities in income levels remained. In 2010, average income was \$18,586 among aboriginals on reserves and \$30,266 off reserves. For non-aboriginals, the average was \$41,052.

Some progress was seen in the Inuit and Metis populations. Inuit unemployment declined slightly. The average income gap between Metis and non-aboriginals also shrank.

Still, the goal set by the board three years ago to close the gap in economic outcomes by 2022 is far from being realized, the report found.

“It is clear that there is still much work to be done before aboriginal people are in the same position as other Canadians to contribute to and benefit from one of the world’s wealthiest economies,” Clarence Louie, chief of B.C.’s Osoyoos Indian Band and the board’s chair, said in a statement.

The report called on the federal government to come up with specific strategies for closing the prosperity gap for First Nations on reserves, make sure aboriginal people have access to high-quality education and tailor skills development and training to the unique needs of aboriginals.

“Our government agrees that economic development is key to improving living conditions of Aboriginal peoples,” read a statement by the office of Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt.

It said the government had enhanced income assistance through the First Nations Job Fund and expanded opportunities for First Nations to manage reserve land and resources, but did not specifically address the findings of the report.

Bob Nault, a former Liberal Minister of Indian Affairs, said many reserves still lack basic infrastructure, which is hindering economic development.

“If you don’t have basic infrastructure, sewer, water, roads, grids, the expectation of being able to create an economy are very slim to none,” he said.

Besides helping to improve infrastructure, the government needs to make more “discretionary funding” available for small business loans and capital improvements.

“If we want First Nations to be partners, whether it’s in mining, forestry or pipelines, some of these First Nations are not capable of putting all the money on the table. They need some help from government,” Nault said.

J.P. Gladu, president of the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, said he is encouraged by growing partnerships on resource projects — the report said over \$675 billion worth of natural resource opportunities are expected across Canada over the next 10 years, most of which will be located on or near traditional lands — but said more needs to be done to convince young, educated aboriginal people to return to their communities.

“I’m an example. We go out as people and get educated. We get our skills and training, our advanced degree, but there’s nothing to draw us back to the community. There’s no economic base so we continue to drain our communities of our best and brightest,” he said.

“If there’s no job, why would I go back to my community? That’s the case for many First Nations in the country.”

Direct Link: <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/government-stumped-as-report-shows-aboriginal-wage-gap-widening-unemployment-growing>

Aboriginal Jobs & Labour

First Nations group focuses on job demand

ANDREA GUNN

Published June 17, 2015 - 7:26pm

Last Updated June 18, 2015 - 12:16pm



With Canada’s baby boomers getting set to retire and the growth of a number of industries requiring skilled workers, a major shift in the labour force is on the horizon. One group is trying to make sure Canada’s aboriginal communities are at the forefront.

According to the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, roughly 317,000 new skilled workers will be needed in Canada by 2017 to replace retirees and meet new demand. Construction on energy projects will be a major part of that need.

One of the mandates of the council is bridging the gap between the trades sector and aboriginal communities. The organization is hosting a luncheon in Halifax on Thursday called “Trades perspective: A look at the road ahead to bolster aboriginal participation” to facilitate building mutually beneficial relationships between corporate Canada and aboriginal communities.

The keynote speaker is Christopher Smillie, senior adviser of government relations and public affairs with Canada’s Building Trades Union. Smillie is slated to discuss issues like how to engage aboriginal communities to participate in the trades; recruitment, hiring

and training of aboriginal people looking to enter the construction workforce; and retention plans within the trades sector.

J.P. Gladu, president and CEO of the council, said Canada's aboriginal communities represent a large, untapped workforce that could benefit the trades sector in a big way.

"In the next 10 years, we're going to lose 25 per cent of our workforce in the trades sector, and on the other side of that we've got Canada's fastest(-growing), youngest demographic," Gladu told The Chronicle Herald. "Half of (the aboriginal) age demographic is below 26 ... and it's growing."

Gladu called the relationship between the aboriginal population and corporate Canada fragmented, and said the only way to strengthen that bond is to facilitate communication.

"Rebuilding that trust is going to take a long time and the challenge is that we're running out of time when it comes to some of the major projects that are happening in this country," he said.

"Without good relationships between the indigenous community and corporate Canada, our efficiency as global competitors, and our ability to get projects done, becomes hampered."

Moreover, he said, there is major government infrastructure spending on the horizon — \$250 million over five years in Nova Scotia alone — which could benefit from a skilled aboriginal workforce.

Gladu said he believes all levels of government should play a role in supporting the relationship between corporations and aboriginal communities.

"This game of Ping-Pong in this country between the provinces and the feds and indigenous people being in the middle has to stop, and industry is starting to understand this."

Statistics from the Nova Scotia Office of Aboriginal Affairs website cite the unemployment rate for people living on-reserve in the 2006 census at 24.6 per cent compared with 9.1 per cent for all Nova Scotians. The unemployment rate for all people of aboriginal identity was 15.5 per cent.

According to the Labour and Advanced Education Department, as of April 30, there were 161 aboriginal apprentices in Nova Scotia, and the province is looking to increase that number.

"The agency is working with industry and stakeholders to engage communities and employers to increase participation and certification in apprenticeship training," a department spokeswoman said in an e-mail.

There are already a number of initiatives in Nova Scotia to connect aboriginal youth to the trades sector. The province is working with First Nation communities to provide pre-apprenticeship opportunities in trades such as carpentry, bricklaying and ironworking, and preparing to offer certification examination refresher training in Cape Breton and Antigonish for interested members of the aboriginal community. At the high school level, a program called Finding Your Inspiration connects aboriginal students with job shadowing opportunities and post-secondary institutions.

The Labour and Advanced Education Department said of the 161 aboriginal apprentices in Nova Scotia, nine per cent are women. Nationally, Gladu said, women make up only four per cent of apprenticeship tradespeople, making them a major untapped workforce potential.

“We’ve got to start being more strategic in this country and take this chance to influence corporate Canada to recognize this as an asset to invest in,” he said. “We need to partner with governments to ensure the indigenous population is prepared. When that happens, Canada becomes a stronger country.”

The luncheon is taking place at the Westin Nova Scotian at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday.

Direct Link: <http://thechronicleherald.ca/business/1293723-first-nations-group-focuses-on-job-demand>

Aboriginal Politics

Judge rules on evidence; Inuit election case can now proceed

QIA ordered to produce documents related to December 2014 election

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, June 12, 2015 - 11:31 am



QIA and NTI beneficiaries waiting for election results this past Dec. 8. The legality of the Iqaluit community director election is still in dispute, following an application that candidate Madeleine Redfern filed Jan. 7 at the Nunavut Court of Justice. Following a ruling by Justice Beverly Browne that orders QIA to produce a long list of documents, that course may now proceed, although Redfern said she is still open to an out-of-court settlement if QIA is willing to negotiate. (FILE PHOTO)

Justice Beverly Browne has decided that the Qikiqtani Inuit Association has to produce a whole bunch of documents so that a judicial review of the Dec. 8, 2014, election can proceed in Nunavut court.

But Madeleine Redfern, who launched the judicial review after losing the election last year for the Iqaluit community director position on QIA's board, didn't get everything she wanted.

In a decision handed down June 10, Browne said five of eight batches or categories of documents must now form part of the court record when the case goes forward.

But, the judge added, it's not even clear whether this case should be heard at all.

"It is an interesting issue as to whether or not an election of individuals pursuant to the by-laws of an Inuit land claims organization is subject to judicial review," she wrote in her judgment. "That issue will be dealt with in the course of time."

The QIA [held an election](#) for president and Iqaluit community director in early December last year and set up polling stations in all Baffin communities as well as in two locations in Ottawa to allow Baffin Inuit in Ottawa to vote.

But Ottawamiut could only vote for the president's position. If they wanted to vote for the Iqaluit community director post, they had to do so by proxy — designating someone else to vote for them.

An election notice published by the QIA in November 2015 did not stipulate that rule and Redfern, who lost the election by one vote, says the election is tainted because eligible voters were not properly informed and therefore denied their right to vote.

She wants the court to [order a new vote](#).

But the case has been bogged down in a [spat over evidence](#) ever since Jan. 7 when Redfern launched the action.

Redfern said in an email to *Nunatsiaq News* that she felt QIA was fighting disclosure in an application that seemed “designed to run up my costs.”

That evidence includes materials related to communications regarding the voting process, training for election staff and even ballot boxes containing votes.

In her written decision, Browne set up a chart describing the documents in question and her ruling for each specific request.

Of the eight batches of documents that Redfern request, Browne allowed five.

The most significant was a box containing ballots cast for president and the Iqaluit community director position in Iqaluit. Browne said no to that. “The issue before the court revolves around votes cast in Ottawa,” she wrote.

Browne had to consider the importance of protecting voter confidentiality as well.

But Browne ordered all communication documents related to election procedures, processes and rules ought to form part of evidence and she ordered the QIA to produce those.

Included in that disclosure should be copies of any questions or complaints that relate to the Iqaluit community director election, Ottawa polling place or the proxy balloting system, Browne wrote.

Redfern seemed pleased that the court ruled in her favour on most of the documents and added in her email, “I look forward to having my day in court, however, my offer to mediate this matter with the QIA still stands.”

The QIA rejected her [offer of mediation](#) in March.

Browne has ordered that Redfern pay the cost for these preliminary proceedings.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674judge_rules_on_evidence_inuit_electi_on_case_can_now_proceed/

Herb Norwegian acclaimed as Dehcho First Nations grand chief



Herb Norwegian has been acclaimed to another three-year term as grand chief of the Dehcho First Nations.

Norwegian was the only candidate to submit a nomination package before the deadline Wednesday at 5 p.m.

There will be a motion to make his election official at the Dehcho First Nations Annual General Assembly June 24-26 in Fort Simpson.

Norwegian was first elected Dehcho grand chief in 2003, and was re-elected in 2006. He was then [ousted from the position in 2008](#) after pleading guilty to assaulting a woman.

He was elected grand chief again in 2012.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/herb-norwegian-acclaimed-as-dehcho-first-nations-grand-chief-1.3110339>

Cuthand: Ottawa can't off-load First Nations to provinces

By Doug Cuthand, The StarPhoenix June 12, 2015



Doug Cuthand

There are two ways a government can reduce spending: It can cut the budget; and it can fail to spend the amounts allocated in the budget. In the case of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, the federal government has done both.

In spite of First Nations having the fastest growing population in Canada, the government has cut the budget for Aboriginal Affairs in recent years. The department's fiscal blueprint indicates that its budget will shrink by a billion dollars, to \$7 billion in 2017-18.

In addition to the budget cuts, the department also has \$1 billion in lapsed funding over the past five years, or an average of \$200 million a year that it failed to spend. The money is returned to the federal treasury.

This places Aboriginal Affairs among the leaders in lapsed spending. It's even worse when you consider that Aboriginal Affairs is underfunded to begin with, and the demand for housing, infrastructure and social spending continues to increase.

Last year, for example, the department didn't spend \$30 million earmarked for education capital. This is money that could have been used to repair and build schools. There are schools on reserves all across the country that need repairs, and not just cosmetic changes. My First Nation was told there was no money available to repair the roof of our school. Rather than experience serious water damage, the band spent its own funds to do the repairs.

On one hand, it's a good thing to take the initiative.

But on the other, education is a treaty right and the federal government has a legal and constitutional responsibility to provide funding. The government's strategy appears to be to force First Nations to pay for their treaty rights or do without, which will result in an outward migration because of a lack of adequate services. It's a more sophisticated form of starving Indians to achieve government objectives.

I recommend that any First Nation that spends money to repair its education infrastructure should send a bill to Aboriginal Affairs.

The government implemented a program in 2012 that awards senior managers with bonuses if they are able to cut funding. Treasury Board President Tony Clement announced in 2011 that performance evaluations would be tied to budget cuts, and that 40 per cent of "at risk" pay would be based on how much they contributed to the government's budget targets. Senior managers stood to receive bonuses of up to 20 per cent of their at risk pay.

On the surface this gave the impression of increased efficiency. In reality, however, it gave Aboriginal Affairs licence to hold back funds and send money back to Ottawa. The department has a long history of repressing Indians rather than serving as their advocate.

It has a corporate culture that is not developmental but one that is controlling and colonial. Many of its bureaucrats also harbour grudges against aggressive native leaders who have confronted them in the past. For them, the opportunity to claim a bonus and hold back funding was a perfect fit.

The result was an overzealous department that "saved" the government more than \$1 billion over five years.

In the meantime, while the Indian agents fiddled the Indians burned. We continued to fall further behind in funding for education, social services, housing and infrastructure.

The average amount available for First Nations education federally is about \$6,500 per student. The average cost per student provincially for off-reserve education is about \$10,500. Child and family services also suffers from a similar shortfall, and a decision from the human rights tribunal on a complaint is imminent. All indications point to a positive decision in favour of the First Nations.

This shortfall continues to grow because First Nations funding is based on a 17-year-old decision to increase their budgets at a rate capped at two per cent per year. The rate of inflation, and an aboriginal population growth rate that is four times the national average, combine to outpace the funding increases to the extent that we have a shortfall in basic services of about 25 per cent to 30 per cent.

While it was hopelessly inadequate, even that two per cent cap is now a memory because the department plans to cut a billion dollars from its budget by 2017-18. To accomplish this, the federal government will have to transfer its constitutional responsibilities to the provinces, in effect dumping it on the provincial budgets. This was the aim of the 1969 white paper on Indian policy, which was universally rejected by the First Nations.

No other group in Canada would allow the government to make such significant cuts or unilaterally decide such far reaching policy changes.

I don't see our people standing still for this travesty. Demonstrations and confrontations such as Oka and Idle No More will be considered child's play if the government continues down this path.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/life/Cuthand+Ottawa+load+First+Nations+provinces/11130424/story.html>

Milke: The facts about aboriginal funding in Canada

[Mark Milke, for the Calgary Herald](#)

Published on: June 13, 2015

Last Updated: June 13, 2015 3:00 AM MDT



Health Canada spent almost \$1.1 billion on supplementary benefits such as dental care for eligible First Nations and Inuit Canadians in 2013/14. That coverage is not required by treaties or by the Constitution. Most other Canadians must spend out-of-pocket or buy insurance for such items, says Mark Milke.

Thinking hard about history can be a useful exercise, if incorrect assumptions are reformed. This was one goal of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report on residential schools, which, in early June, published a 388-page summary of its forthcoming final report.

Others have already debated some assumptions in the report — healthy, given that history should never be left to past or present politics. Here, I will deal with popular beliefs about funding for First Nations people in Canada — something I have some familiarity with, having traced such numbers back to the mid-20th century.

An analysis of the money is critical for four reasons.

First, in some cases, it corrects the record. The commission claims there is currently inequity in education funding for First Nation students on reserve vis-a-vis students in provincial public schools. Wrong. National on-reserve funding per student in the 2010/11 school year amounted to \$13,524, compared to \$11,646 per student, on average, in provincial public schools across Canada.

Second, if it's assumed that the Canadian public, through their tax dollars, do not spend enough on aboriginal matters (a chronic claim from Assembly of First Nations Grand

Chief Perry Bellegarde), an improper focus on funding and not outcomes is often the result.

For example, as my colleague Ravina Bains points out, existing reserve governments often determine how elementary and secondary education dollars are spent. That becomes a problem when parents want to send their child off-reserve, as they may be on the hook for the education cost. At that point, “parents have no recourse but to pay for their children’s education privately,” as Bains has written, “or, against their wishes, send their children to the on-reserve school.”

Surely in pursuit of better education outcomes, in 2015, reserve parents should not be instructed by reserve governments about which school their kids must be enrolled in, with the not-so-subtle threat of withdrawn funding if parents don’t follow politicians’ wishes.

Third, there has been no shortage of attempts to ameliorate poor outcomes on reserves and elsewhere with increased taxpayer funding.

Data gleaned from federal archives and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada show that spending per registered First Nations person jumped to \$9,056 per person by 2012, from \$922 in 1950 (the figures are adjusted for inflation, so this is an apple-to-apple comparison). That’s an 882 per cent per capita increase in real terms.

In comparison, all federal program spending on all Canadians (including First Nations) rose to \$7,316 per person in 2012, from \$1,504 per capita back in 1950 — a 387 per cent increase in real terms.

Taxpayers have been increasingly generous to Canada’s aboriginal people. Although, for the record, I’m not asserting 1950s funding was optimal; the point is that growth in per capita spending on specific First Nations programs and transfers has outpaced the general growth in general program spending for everyone. Also, remember that aboriginal Canadians also benefit from that general spending, in addition to aboriginal-specific spending.

Lastly, Canadians have often been generous through the tax system in ways not required by treaty or the Constitution. For example, some government programs exist that provide tax-funded benefits solely for First Nations people, which are unavailable to the general population.

For example, in 2013/14, Health Canada spent almost \$1.1 billion on supplementary benefits such as dental care, vision care and pharmaceutical drugs for eligible First Nations and Inuit Canadians. That coverage is not required by treaties or by the Constitution. And most other Canadians must spend out-of-pocket or buy insurance for such items.

It is impossible to argue successive governments have not sought to address some lagging social conditions for selected aboriginals by using tax dollars. They have. That fact

should raise many questions about, for example, a lack of choice in education or the remote location of many reserves. Those two realities alone might better explain the plight of aboriginal Canadians in the 21st century.

Mark Milke is a senior fellow with the Fraser Institute and author of [Ever-Higher: Government spending on Canada's Aboriginals since 1947](#).

Direct Link: <http://calgaryherald.com/opinion/columnists/milke-the-facts-about-aboriginal-funding-in-canada>

AFN identifies 51 swing ridings ahead of October's federal election



National chief Perry Bellegarde speaks after being elected on the first ballot at the Assembly of First Nations Election in Winnipeg on Wednesday, December 10, 2014. (Trevor Hagan/THE CANADIAN PRESS)

Kristy Kirkup, The Canadian Press
Published Sunday, June 14, 2015 3:35PM EDT

OTTAWA -- The national chief of the Assembly of First Nations says aboriginal voters could make the difference between a majority and minority government in the next federal election.

Perry Bellegarde says his advocacy organization has identified 51 influential ridings, including several in western Canada, where First Nations voters could affect the outcome.

He said the AFN is now working to mobilize the vote.

"We didn't have the right to vote in federal politics until 1961," he said. "So now we've been allowed to participate, we are starting to harness that political energy, that political power."

Bellegarde says his organization wants to ensure aboriginal people make informed choices

Specifically, he said they need to know which federal parties favour treaty implementation and support investments in areas such as housing, training and education.

Joseph Garcea, who heads the political science department at the University of Saskatchewan, said the AFN is also trying to send a strong message to political parties about the need for campaigns that resonate with aboriginal voters and First Nations communities.

"You might actually be able to influence the parties in terms of the way they are going to articulate a platform and in terms of the extent to which they are going to get out there and try and mobilize that vote as well," Garcea said.

The AFN is also working with Elections Canada to help First Nations gain access to voting tools.

The Fair Elections Act, which passed amid great controversy in the Commons, eliminated the process of vouching at polling stations. That practice had allowed properly identified voters to vouch for someone who lacked proper identification.

The changes have created some concern among First Nations.

"We want to make sure it is easy and seamless," Bellegarde said. "With the new passage of that bill, it is almost like voter suppression because there is a lot of information that is required."

The legislation also ended the use of voter information cards issued by Elections Canada as a means of identification. Voters are now required to provide identification and proof of residency.

"Sometimes on the reserve that's not always there, easily accessible," Bellegarde said.

Garcea said Bellegarde understands the impact of the aboriginal vote partly because the national chief is from Saskatchewan. The First Nations vote has been very influential in that province, especially in its northern ridings, Garcea said.

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/afn-identifies-51-swing-ridings-ahead-of-october-s-federal-election-1.2422157>

Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

'I hope I get arrested': Jane Fonda sides with First Nations against Kinder Morgan pipeline

Laura Kane

VANCOUVER — The Canadian Press

Published Saturday, Jun. 13, 2015 2:33PM EDT

Last updated Saturday, Jun. 13, 2015 9:03PM EDT

In 1970, Jane Fonda was arrested while marching with indigenous people during the occupation of Fort Lawton in Seattle, Wa.

Forty-five years later, the Academy Award-winning actress says she's willing to be placed in handcuffs again while defending British Columbia's coast from oil tankers.

"I have a hit TV show now. If I get arrested it'll bring even more attention to the issue," Fonda deadpanned in an interview with The Canadian Press. "I hope I get arrested."

Fonda, currently starring in the Netflix comedy "Grace and Frankie," was in Vancouver on Saturday to speak at a Greenpeace rally. Protesters at the "Toast the Coast" event were planning to demonstrate against oil sands development, tanker traffic and Arctic drilling.

The tenacious activist said she stands with local First Nations who have opposed Kinder Morgan's proposed Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, which would lay almost 1,000 kilometres of new pipe along an existing line from Edmonton to Burnaby, B.C.

If approved by the National Energy Board, the project would triple the pipeline's bitumen-carrying capacity to 890,000 barrels a day and increase the number of tankers in Burrard Inlet seven-fold.

"I don't think it's going to happen," said Fonda. "What is just so moving to me is that it's First Nations people who are at the front lines of stopping the expansion and stopping the pipelines.

"Of course, oil companies are still trying to push them through and they will continue to try. First Nations people – with a whole lot of us standing behind them and alongside them – are going to try to stop it and I think we're going to succeed."

The 77-year-old star said she was inspired by Canadian author Naomi Klein's latest book, "This Changes Everything," which targets climate change as the era's most pressing issue.

“It absolutely racked me and brought me back to the barricades. I’m going to commit the rest of my life to stopping global warming by preventing fossil fuels from being extracted,” said Fonda.

She said development of the Alberta oil sands must stop, adding that she hopes Canadians signal their opposition to the industry at the next federal election.

Fonda said she wants to be on the “right side of history” when it comes to fossil fuels.

“Committing the rest of my life is no big deal, I don’t have that much left,” she quipped.

“But my grandchildren have a lot left and I want them to be able to feel proud of me, to feel that ... I did every single possible thing I could do to make their world a livable world.”

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/i-hope-i-get-arrested-jane-fonda-sides-with-first-nations-against-kinder-morgan-pipeline/article24951279/>

The fight for the Great Bear

The push to save a large swath of wilderness that has become known as the Great Bear Rainforest began 20 years ago. Reporter **Justine Hunter** and photographer **John Lehmann** visit the forest that inspired a unique collaboration between industry, environmentalists and First Nations

Long before the phrase “Great Bear Rainforest” was dreamed up by environmental activists, David Garrick – better known as Walrus – had set up camp to protect the region’s ancient trees from logging.

An anthropologist and one of the founders of Greenpeace, Walrus has been ensconced on the site he calls Earth Embassy on Hanson Island for so long he has come to resemble a woodland spirit, with his green felted hat, wild eyebrows and flowing silver mane of hair.

In 1982, he launched a campaign to stop logging on Hanson Island on behalf of the Kwakwaka’wakw First Nation. He knew from the start what others would take many years to recognize: Protecting old growth forests on B.C.’s coast requires collaboration with First Nations.

The campaign to save old-growth forests in the vast stretch of coastline that makes up the Great Bear Rainforest is now two decades old and it is just approaching the finish line, with final approval of an agreement to govern land-use in area expected this fall.

The initial plan was cooked up behind closed doors between environmentalists and forest company executives who had been forced to the table under threat of market boycotts.

When the news leaked out, First Nations leaders on the coast were furious that this cabal was making plans for these lands in their traditional territories. The damage done would take years to undo.

Earlier this week, the B.C. government announced a final land-use plan to protect 3.1 million hectares in the central and north coast of British Columbia from logging. Years of technical work has gone into the fine details of what is needed to maintain ecosystem integrity – habitat for grizzly bears and marbled murrelets – in this temperate rainforest.

The details

What is it?

The Great Bear Rainforest refers to a vast stretch of B.C.'s north and central coast, the largest coastal temperate rainforest on the planet. Since 2000, several agreements have been implemented to reduce logging, but the final pact, if adopted by the province in the fall, will ensure protection of 70 per cent of the old-growth forests in the region.

Size

6.4-million hectares, of which 3.1 million hectares will be under various forms of protection from logging. Mining and tourism will be permitted in some areas that are off limits to logging and hydro-electric power projects.

What is the agreement?

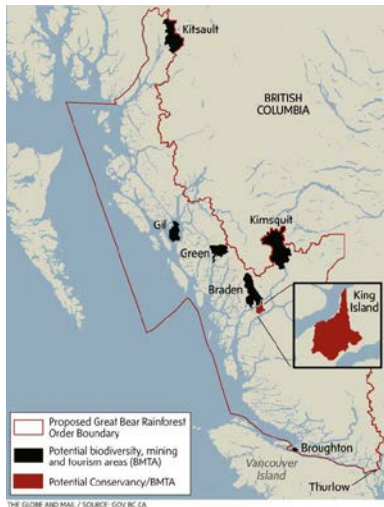
Environmentalists called off international marketing campaigns against B.C. forest companies in exchange for protection of wildlife, cultural and ecological values.

Who negotiated the agreement?

The Rainforest Solutions Project is comprised of Greenpeace, ForestEthics Solutions and the Sierra Club of B.C. The Coast Forest Conservation Initiative includes Western Forest Products, Catalyst, Interfor, Howe Sound Pulp and Paper and B.C. Timber Sales. Other forestry companies operating in the region will still have to follow the new rules.

How would the agreement be policed?

Companies would file their forestry plans under the new “ecosystem based management” regulations and forest ministry staff would be responsible for ensuring the terms are met.



Along the way, the ambitious collaboration almost derailed many times. Coffee cups were flung in anger and peace was brokered in the strangest places.

Now, the details are up for public comment, but the last of the heavy lifting will be done in private meetings with aboriginal leaders who represent the 27 First Nations in the region. They are still negotiating the other half of this deal: what benefits the Great Bear Rainforest will bring to its human residents.

When the campaign to stop logging in the region was first mapped out in the mid-1990s, the idea was to replicate the anti-logging victory in Clayoquot Sound on a larger scale, recalls veteran campaigner Valerie Langer of ForestEthics Solutions. One logging company in particular was going to be targeted with a campaign aimed at its customers.

“We had our sights set on taking Interfor down. We would make them so toxic no one would buy from them,” she said.

The NDP premier of the time, Glen Clark, declared the campaigners “enemies of B.C.,” and it would be a decade before another premier, Liberal Gordon Campbell, would publicly utter the phrase “Great Bear Rainforest.”

But when a representative of the German publishing industry came to B.C. and sat down with both sides, he challenged them to work out their conflicts. He represented \$600-million worth of paper publishing contracts in B.C., and his clients wanted to be assured they were buying “clean” paper. It was a pivotal moment that brought industry to the table.

After years of trench warfare, relations were toxic. A mediator was brought in who decided a change of scene was needed. The two sides were invited to an Elton John concert, where they would share a private box.

“So we are all in a box, talking together, and we start joking around about what people might have to do to get the forest industry to stop logging in intact watersheds while we sit down to talk,” Jody Holmes said. Ms. Holmes is a conservation biologist who was tasked with transforming the concept “save the rainforest” into the science of how much preservation was enough to maintain a healthy forest.

“At some point, one guy on the industry side says, ‘If you dance with me to this song, I’ll give you such-and-such a valley.’ So we had this series of dances in the box watching the Elton John concert where we basically negotiated a bunch of the valleys that were going to be off limits.”



Walrus leads a group to the grandmother tree estimated to be 1,300 years old.

With about 100 valleys temporarily saved, the detailed work needed to begin. It would take complex algorithms to establish where the old growth is and what habitat is required to sustain wildlife, while at the same time ensuring no one logging company or community would carry an unequal share of the burden.

It was a major shift for the environmental movement to accept that it would have to find a balance that would not bring the forest industry to its knees. “Environmentalists also have to grow up in the process,” Ms. Holmes said. “We had to evolve from: ‘We are good guys and they are the bad guys.’”

Rick Jeffery, president of the Coast Forest Products Association, was brought in as the forest industry’s lead negotiator on the Great Bear Rainforest in 2012, when the project was once again threatening to implode.

At this point, the First Nations had laid out their objectives – to incorporate benefits for their communities.

“It turns out you have to make sure you take care of the communities – that’s a pretty big piece of the story,” he said.

Mr. Jeffery said industry and environmental organizations have invested millions of dollars in figuring out how to carve up the 6.4-million-hectare region so that 70 per cent of the old growth is protected. The complexity of the trade-offs was taking so long to sort out that both sides were having a hard time keeping their organizations at the table.

“Then, all of a sudden, we made a breakthrough with something called the rapid assessment tool – the RAT. It allowed us to run scenarios quickly.” The RAT could quickly calculate effects of preserving selected parcels of land with the inputs of geography, wildlife habitat, and timber harvesting rights.

Now he is impatient to see the province and First Nations complete their part. The industry has bought into a new way of doing forestry as a marketing opportunity. “We get a stable working environment with a known set of rules for that area, and we get the ability to operate in the Great Bear Rainforest and be able to tell the world that this is part of our world-class forest management system.”

The group that he represents does not include all the forest companies operating in the region – TimberWest is an outlier and is facing intense pressure over its current operations.

But Interfor almost brought the project down early on when the company’s representative walked away from the table.

“It was a crisis point,” said Catherine Stewart, who led the negotiations for Greenpeace for the first decade. “Our agreement with the companies was always that if one company pulls out, we are free to resume contact with their customers.” Interfor’s customers started getting calls urging a boycott. But some of the forest companies still at the table were buying wood chips from Interfor, and a decision was made to put the heat on them as well.

“Even our colleagues in the environment movement were pretty worried the deal was going to implode – but in the end it worked and everyone came back to the table and resumed serious negotiations. It was a gamble. We were taking a chance it could all fall apart. But throughout this process, people have taken big risks,” Ms. Stewart said.



Walrus.

The rockiest road has been bringing the 27 First Nations in the region on board.

Dallas Smith, president of the Nanwakolas First Nations, which represents most of the communities in the southern half of the Great Bear Rainforest, said the initial concept was met with hostility. Two parties were locked in a battle over their traditional territories without considering the wishes of First Nations. “We felt like children in a divorce,” he said.

Even the name, the Great Bear Rainforest, was a non-starter.

“I hated it. I thought it was insulting,” he said. Over time, he has accepted that there are benefits to having a brand that can mobilize support. Using that name, environmental organizations raised \$60-million to start a fund for First Nations in the region.

In February, 2006, Mr. Smith was one of the celebratory partners who shared in premier Campbell’s announcement of an early framework agreement for land-use. “We got home to our communities and expected to be congratulated, expecting to celebrate with our communities. And our elders sat us down and said, ‘Don’t sprain your arm patting yourself on the back, because you are not finished.’”

It was another pivotal moment that would reshape the direction of the final product.

“Those of us leaders at the table got caught up in the whirlwind of how important the Great Bear Rainforest was to the rest of the world.” . . Our communities needed us to be focusing on the fact that communities need to be taken care of first.”

Now that marine plans and land-use maps are in place, he said, the provincial government must complete the agreements that will determine how this will help those who live in the region.

“My communities have to become better places to live as a result of the ecological protection and the resource development we’ve agreed to in our territories.” Issues around ferry service and trophy hunting are on the table, but to Mr. Smith it means jobs in a sustainable resource industry and in helping manage the protected areas.



Walrus and Kumi Naidoo place their hands on the grandmother tree.

This spring, Walrus led Greenpeace International’s executive director, Kumi Naidoo, through the trails of Hanson Island to a towering cedar he calls the grandmother tree. It has been growing here for 1,300 years and has charring from a fire 400 years ago. The grandmother tree would have been turned into 2x4s without Walrus’ efforts.

“This was planned to be logged right here,” Walrus explained. “I went for broke and said, ‘Well, let’s protect the whole island.’” He helped map thousands of trees on the island that show the marks of past First Nations use, eventually forcing the province to protect the island, which is now one of the gateways to the Great Bear Rainforest. Today, the Kwakwaka’wakw children come to him for tutoring, to learn about the trees that prove their ancestors practised sustainable harvesting more than 1,000 years ago.

Mr. Naidoo was a human rights activist in South Africa before he moved to Amsterdam to head up Greenpeace, and he sees environmental objectives entwined in social justice. This spring, he visited First Nations communities before travelling to Hanson Island to see the region for which his organization has spent almost 20 years fighting.

“Walking in an old-growth forest is very special like no other experience,” he said. Mr. Naidoo said later the journey to this agreement offers knowledge that will be carried over into other Greenpeace campaigns.

“We have already learned some lessons coming out of the Great Bear Rainforest,” he said. The first lesson is “how important it is to work with indigenous communities who are the rightful title holders to lands never given up in treaty. Ultimately, they are the best stewards of their lands. This is important both from a social justice perspective as well as an environmental perspective.”

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/great-bear-rainforest/article24928905/>

Aglukkaq hopes to head off third U.S. up-list bid for polar bear

Environment minister brings large delegation to meeting near Washington

JIM BELL, June 15, 2015 - 5:48 am



Environment Minister Leona Aglukkaq hopes to head off a third attempt by the U.S. government that would up-list the status of the polar bear under CITES. (FILE PHOTO)

Saying it's time for Canada and Inuit living in Canada to educate the Americans, Environment Minister Leona Aglukkaq spent three days last week in West Virginia at a conference aimed at informing them about Canada's polar bear management systems to head off future conflicts with them over wildlife conservation.

And to help get her point across, she brought a team of Inuit and northern representatives from across the Canadian Arctic with her to the conference, which was held June 10 to June 12 at the small town of Shepherdstown on the West Virginia side of the Potomac River, about 120 km from Washington, D.C.

They included Nunavut Environment Minister Johnny Mike and representatives from Inuit land claim bodies across the Canadian Arctic that are involved in polar bear management.

“It isn’t about picking science or traditional knowledge, it’s about picking both and using both to make good management plans for polar bears, so it’s very important to bring everyone together to talk about what we are doing,” Aglukkaq said in an interview.

Also attending were representatives from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Inupiat from Alaska, various non-governmental organizations. Prior to the Shepherdstown conference, Aglukkaq also held meetings in Washington, where she met Senator Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Senator Angus King of Maine.

One big goal of the meeting was to head off a third U.S. attempt to up-list the status of polar bears under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.

“What I want to accomplish is that Canada and the Inuit groups won’t have to go back and fight the issue of up-listing the polar bear at CITES,” Aglukkaq said.

In March 2013, [the U.S. delegation at the last CITES meeting in Bangkok, Thailand failed](#) in an attempt to up-list polar bears from the organization’s Appendix II list to Appendix I.

Such a move would have put polar bears in a category reserved for the world’s most immediately endangered species, such as tigers, gorillas, jaguars, rhinos and panda bears, which are threatened with extinction.

And all international trade in all polar bear parts would have been banned.

Aglukkaq said Canada believes a third attempt to up-list the polar bear at CITES is not necessary, but there are indications the U.S. may try again.

That’s why Canada must inform the Americans about the country’s “world-class management system for polar bears.”

And a big part of that is the role played by Inuit in Canada through co-management systems created by land claims agreements.

“They have a huge role to demonstrate how Inuit land claim groups in Canada are working together in managing sub-populations that cross their land claim settlement areas, how Inuit knowledge is being used in management and quota setting and so forth, and also to demonstrate that indigenous people have a huge role to play in passing on traditional knowledge about conservation...,” she said.

Also, Aglukkaq said the Americans and others need to know that Canada is bound by land claims agreements with Inuit that are entrenched within the Constitution.

“It’s an opportunity for Canada to tell the story that we have land claims agreements that allow, through constitutionally entrenched agreements, the right to manage wildlife and so on,” she said.

Another goal of the Shepherdstown conference: to work towards a co-operation agreement with the U.S. for the conservation and management of a sub-population that is shared between the Inuvialuit and the Inupiat of Alaska.

And Aglukkaq repeated that Canada’s polar bear management system does not depend on a binary choice between science and traditional Inuit knowledge, and that one does not dominate the other.

“The management plans that we have in place are solid and bring together science and the traditional knowledge of Inuit,” she said.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674aglukkaq_schools_the_yanks_on_canadian_polar_bear_management/

Land Claims & Treaty Rights

Line 9 Pipeline Could Start Pumping Heavy Oil Soon Despite First Nations Court Challenge

June 12, 2015

By David Gray-Donald



A Line 9 protest in Toronto. Photo by Michael Toledano

Despite opposition to the Enbridge's Line 9 pipeline from municipalities and First Nations, plans to get oil flowing east to Quebec through the 40-year old line are on the verge of becoming a reality, pending final-final approval by the National Energy Board.

However, a court case brought forward by the Chippewa of the Thames First Nation (COTTFN), an Anishanabek community near London, Ontario, could have an impact when it begins June 16 in Toronto.

The Line 9B pipeline west terminal is located in Westover, Ontario and its east terminal is in Montreal, closely following Highway 401 for most of that distance. Since 2012, Enbridge has tried to get approval to reverse the flow of Line 9B to pump up to 300,000 barrels per day of western oil, including heavy tar sands bitumen and lighter Bakken crudes. The [NEB gave Enbridge the nod in February](#), and the Calgary-based company indicated it expected to have the line operational this spring. A [Toronto Media Coop article stated](#) oil could have started flowing "as early as June 1." But the NEB has yet to give its really-final approval.

We asked the NEB what effect of the Chippewa's court case was having on their Line 9B approval process. The NEB told us, "No other court has granted a stay of the Order, so there is no reason why the [National Energy] Board would delay its assessment of the leave to open application for Line 9B."

In plainer language, the NEB is not waiting for the legal challenge to be resolved.

But the NEB also mentioned, "There is no time limit for the NEB's review; we will take the time needed to make the right decision." The NEB won't say when it will give Enbridge the go-ahead, but it is saying the Chippewa's case isn't holding them back. Communities along the line, including COTTFN, are concerned oil could start flowing soon.

Lana Goldberg of Rising Tide Toronto, an organization closely watching and opposing Line 9 developments for years, says, "We're expecting it to start up any day now."

On May 21, COTTFN tried appealing directly to the NEB for a "stay of Board Order," legalese for getting the NEB to pause the project, until issues of consultation were addressed. That application was rejected by the NEB on June 3 following a response from Enbridge calling COTTFN's application "frivolous, vexatious, and an abuse of process."

VICE spoke with Myeengun Henry, a COTTFN band councillor.

"Canada has never consulted us on this project and it's their constitutional obligation to do so. They can't appoint a third party. It should be a nation-to-nation discussion," he said.

The "third party" Henry is referring to is the National Energy Board, which operates at arms-length from the federal government. Cabinet appoints the [NEB's members](#), the majority of whom have worked in the energy industry and are white.

Henry asserts the NEB's consultations with COTTEN on Line 9B amount to "a failure of Canada to live up Section 35 of the Constitution." Section 35 describes Canada's responsibilities to consult with First Nations.

But Henry stresses the importance of looking beyond Section 35 to the treaties it was meant to respect and honour.

"The [Two Row Wampum](#) is a very important treaty in this region," says Henry from his Conestoga College office. "I also carry the Treaty of Niagara belt and 24 Nations belt and let people know what it means." These treaties were made between First Nations of the Great Lakes—St Lawrence region (and other lands) and the British [to successfully ratify the Royal Proclamation of 1763, a document foundational to the Canadian state](#).

"They're about shared relationships and shared resources between indigenous and settler peoples," says Henry of the treaties.

But in court it will be Section 35 taking centre stage, not the treaties. Section 35 will feature in a similar case being heard in Vancouver this fall concerning NEB process for the Northern Gateway pipeline, another Enbridge project mired in delays.

Asked about the suitability of the NEB acting to consult First Nations on behalf of Canada, Natural Resources Canada told VICE, "The NEB is a quasi-judicial body with full authority to consider Constitutional issues within the NEB's mandate. The Government of Canada has complete confidence in the NEB's ability to consider [Section] 35 issues, within its mandate, in a thorough and reliable manner."

Municipalities along the route have expressed concern over the safety of Line 9. After the NEB approved the project in February, the city of Toronto [asked for emergency shut-off valves](#) to be installed on either side of waterways. Montreal joined over 10 Quebec municipalities in asking for hydrostatic tests to determine the strength of the 40-year old pipeline. Industry veteran Richard Kuprewicz [estimated](#) there is a 90 percent chance Line 9 will rupture. The asked-for valves have not been installed and hydrostatic tests have yet to be performed. Enbridge has indicated such tests could potentially damage Line 9.

Speaking to safety concerns, the NEB told us, "If the Board is not convinced that the project will be safe and operated in a manner that protects communities and the environment - Enbridge will not be allowed to operate that pipeline."

VICE asked Enbridge for comment for this story and received no response as of press time.

The COTTEN court challenge begins next Tuesday in Toronto. [A rally is planned outside the courthouse.](#)

Direct Link: http://www.vice.com/en_ca/read/enbridge-line-9b-pipeline-could-start-pumping-heavy-oil-soon-despite-first-nations-court-challenge-123

Natural Gas Minister, Grand Chief at odds on First Nations support of LNG project

'Virtually all' First Nations are on board with LNG project, says Coleman, but B.C.'s Grand Chief disagrees.

[Elizabeth McSheffrey](#)

Jun 12th, 2015



Juvenile salmon among protective eelgrasses of Flora Bank; and an aerial view of Lelu Island (where the Northwest LNG facility is planned) and Ridley Islands near Prince Rupert - Vancouver Observer file photos by Tavish Campbell and Brian Huntington respectively

A day after a Malaysia-led consortium announced conditional approval for a potential \$36-billion liquefied natural gas project near Prince Rupert, there were more questions than answers about First Nations support, following a phone-in press conference held by Rich Coleman.

The Natural Gas Development Minister was asked Friday how the project could go ahead in light of the fact that the local Lax Kw'alaams band members rejected a \$1-billion offer to advance the project. He replied that "virtually all" of B.C.'s First Nations groups affected by the \$11-billion Pacific Northwest LNG project support it.

But Grand Chief Stewart Phillips of the [Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs](#) (UBCIC) is not buying into the project.

“The answer is no,” he told the *Vancouver Observer*. “If the Clark government and Petronas [the energy giant controlling the project] intends to disregard, disrespect and ignore the rights and interests of Lax Kw’alaams and other Indigenous groups, they will be looking at a multitude of court challenges.”

Pacific Northwest LNG's president announced Thursday that the company would move forward pending approval from the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency [CEA] and the B.C. Legislature.

If approved, the new LNG terminal would be built on Lelu Island near Prince Rupert, whose surrounding waters are critical for rearing millions of wild B.C. salmon, according to a Simon Fraser University [report](#).

“Lax Kw’alaams and coastal communities completely depend on salmon and all of the resources of the sea,” Phillips said. “It was a choice between \$1 billion and the complete obliteration of their ability to continue harvesting wild salmon and all of the bounty of the sea on a sustainable basis from this point forward.”

Despite Phillips' opposition, Coleman maintained that his relationships with B.C.'s First Nations communities are “great” in relation to the project.

“There’s actually significant support around First Nations with regards this project and LNG in general,” he said. “So, I’m actually confident that the First Nations will sign, those that are still outstanding.... We’ll continue to work with them on their issues because that’s what we do.”

The CEAA will address conflicts with the sensitive ecosystem around the terminal, he said, and deal with any impact that may come to local salmon.

The environmental agency however, which has expressed concerns about the fate of wild salmon, has now paused its assessment of the project for a third time, asking for more information about Pacific NorthWest LNG’s 3-D modelling for the Lelu Island site.

Either way, these reports are of little consolation to Phillips, who doubts the strength and objectivity of the CEAA’s evaluation process.

“They have vacated the field in terms of environmental assessment and allowed the federal process to carry the ball,” he said. “So we have no great comfort in that process.

“Yet, at the same time, you can sense the hesitancy in that process, as weak as it is — they know and understand that opposition is very deeply rooted and entrenched when a group of greatly impoverished people reject a \$1 billion.”

Though the project would indeed provide income, training and employment for thousands of people in the area including First Nations, it poses an environmental risk UBCIC is simply not willing to take.

According to a *Globe and Mail* [report](#) however, certain Indigenous bands, including Metlakatla, Kitsumkalum, Kitselas, Gitxaala, and Gitga'at, have expressed strong environmental concerns, but maintained their openness pending the results of further research and analysis on its impact.

Direct Link: <http://www.vancouverobserver.com/tags/bc-salmon-0/natural-gas-minister-grand-chief-odds-first-nations-support-lng-project>

Provinces the key to resource-revenue sharing with First Nations

Tom Flanagan

Special to The Globe and Mail

Published Monday, Jun. 15, 2015 3:00AM EDT

Last updated Monday, Jun. 15, 2015 3:00AM EDT

Tom Flanagan is professor emeritus of political science at the University of Calgary and chair of the Aboriginal Futures program for the Frontier Centre for Public Policy.

Resource-revenue sharing has emerged as the next Big Idea for First Nations. Like most Big Ideas, it seems simple, but in reality is full of legal difficulties and unintended economic consequences.

Perry Bellegarde, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), said immediately upon being elected to that position, “If our lands and resources are to be developed, it will be done only with our fair share of the royalties, with our ownership of the resources and jobs for our people.” By “our” he meant all the natural resources of Canada, everywhere, not just on reserves or First Nation settlement lands.

This view contradicts the treaties signed in Ontario and the Prairie provinces, which provided for the surrender of all titles to land and natural resources. But according to the AFN, the treaties do not mean what they say. The AFN says aboriginal leaders actually surrendered land only “to the depth of a plow,” for the purposes of agriculture, so today’s First Nations still own all subsurface rights to minerals and oil and gas.

The plow’s depth theory has never prevailed in court because it lacks historical foundation. It does not appear in the abundant documentary evidence surrounding the

treaties. It first emerged in oral histories collected in the 1970s, a century after the treaties were negotiated. Courts have used oral history when written evidence is lacking or ambiguous, but not to overturn the plain meaning of written agreements supported by other documentation.

First Nations have a legal right to the revenues from resources on reserves. They also, by Supreme Court decision, have a right to be consulted about resource developments affecting claims to aboriginal title or hunting rights guaranteed by treaty, and those consultations have led to lucrative impact and benefit agreements. But First Nations do not have ownership of all natural resources everywhere in Canada. Under the Constitution, the provinces own public lands and natural resources, and the federal government and the AFN cannot impose revenue sharing upon them.

Should the provinces undertake revenue sharing voluntarily within their own jurisdictions? Perhaps, as long as the sharing continues to be realistically tied to the location of resource development. Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec and British Columbia already have provincial programs to share royalties and other revenues with First Nations located near resource plays. And First Nations in all provinces sign impact and benefit agreements to profit from mines, oil and gas wells, pipelines and forestry projects near where they live. All of these measures create revenue, jobs and other opportunities for First Nations while promoting resource development in the larger economy. It's win-win, for First Nations and everyone else.

What about general revenue sharing, which would set aside a percentage of all provincial resource revenues to be distributed among all First Nations? Such sharing would be undesirable in several ways. It would wastefully transfer money to wealthy First Nations already favoured with resource development or other business opportunities, while creating perverse incentives for less economically advanced First Nations. Now they would get money for doing nothing, rather than for finding partners to advance their own economies. It would be an entitlement to a share of other people's efforts rather than a reward for their own efforts.

A recent [report](#) supporting general revenue sharing was entitled "Sharing the Wealth." But wealth is not sitting there waiting to be shared; it must be constantly created. If First Nations are to prosper, they need to be part of the process of wealth creation. Specific resource-revenue sharing works in that direction, but general sharing does not. The provinces should stick with specific revenue sharing, which has been shown to generate new wealth while creating business opportunities for First Nations.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/provinces-the-key-to-resource-revenue-sharing-with-first-nations/article24946525/>

Indian Status: 5 more things you need to know

Dispelling commonly held myths around First Nations and status cards

By Kim Wheeler, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 16, 2015 6:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jun 16, 2015 6:39 PM ET



Although a status card allows "registered Indians" access to some benefits, it's not a credit card and it's not a free pass. (Wawmeesh Hamilton)

A status card is government ID that identifies someone as a "status Indian" as defined by the federal Indian Act.

Although a status card allows "registered Indians" access to some benefits, it's not a credit card and it's not a free pass.

Let's clear up some myths around status cards — as simply as possible.

Not all Aboriginal Peoples are status card-carrying 'Indians'



The Indian Status card is not a credit card. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada)

Not all indigenous people in Canada are eligible for a status card. The Inuit and Métis do not have status cards because they are not an "Indian" as defined by the Indian Act — at least not yet.

In the case of *Daniels v. Canada*, the Federal Court recognized them as "Indians" under the Constitution. The federal government appealed that ruling.

In 2014, the Federal Court of Appeal upheld part of the decision. It ruled that while Métis should remain "Indians" under the Constitution, extending that recognition to "non-status Indians" should be done on a case-by-case basis since it is a separate issue. The case is now before the Supreme Court.

There are "Indians" who don't qualify for a status card but are still indigenous to this country. The government just doesn't recognize the lineage to their family lines. However, their home communities, called "bands," recognize them as members.

Let's just say that if you are a card-carrying "status Indian" and you have a child with a non-status person. Your child would still have status.

However, if that child went on to have a child with a non-status person, their children may not be eligible for a status card. This is just one example of the complicated process of how the government has decided who is and isn't eligible for status.

P.S.: Even though a status card is official government ID, we still are not allowed to use it as ID to vote in elections.

It's an income tax free-for-all

This one drives a lot of indigenous people crazy. Yes, some of us don't pay income taxes. (I'm not one of them, unfortunately.) In order to benefit from this, you have to live and work on reserve.

There is one exception where "status Indians" are tax-exempt on the income they've earned while living off reserve. They have to work at a registered First Nations government organization; that organization has to have its head office on reserve land, which can be an urban reserve. The organization's main objective has to be the "social, cultural, educational or economic development of Indians who for the most part live on reserves. If the duties of employment are in connection with non-commercial activities carried out exclusively for the benefit of Indians who for the most part live on reserves," according to a [Law Now article](#).

We pay GST, PST and the HST. Except when we present our status card to on-reserve gas stations. Except when goods are purchased and delivered on-reserve. Except when we purchase cigarette and tobacco products on-reserve. Except in Ontario, where we are exempt from paying the PST portion of the HST. Then we are tax-exempt. There may be a few other examples, but these are the biggies.

What about all that free stuff?

No, we don't get free houses, free braces, free gas (despite what Justin Bieber so famously stated in a Rolling Stone interview), free trucks or free money when we turn 18. We also don't get free Slurpees. (Yes, someone out there actually believes that.)

We also don't all get free university.

The whole "free university" debate is a contentious one. I use the word "debate" because it is an ongoing myth that we keep needing to correct.

Each band gets a certain amount of money each year for post-secondary education. It doesn't equate into enough for everyone who wants to attend. Also, you can't just show up at the band office, asking for funding.

There are hoops, people! And grade point averages to maintain. Also, you have to reapply every year. There is no guarantee that you will get funding from year to year. This isn't whining. This is a fact.

Your status card is like a passport, right?

"So what you're telling me is you'd be a real Canadian?!"

This has actually been said to a friend of mine. The person quoted believed that if people live on a reserve that they are not Canadians. But we are real Canadians, arguably the First Canadians.

Did you know "status Indians" actually need a Canadian passport in order to fly out of the country?

However, we are still allowed to drive over the border with a status card.

The sky's the limit for health care

Actually, there is a ceiling for what is covered and what isn't. Each year, that health care coverage gets more and more limited as to what Aboriginal Affairs will cover for prescription medicines, dental care, eye care and medical devices.

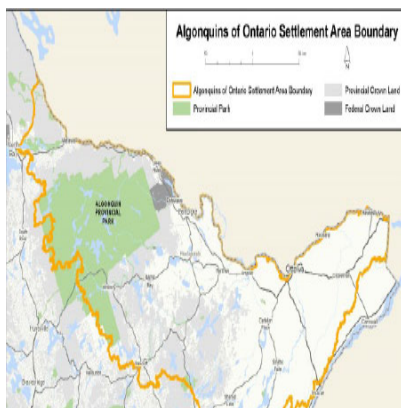
We can't flash a status card and get a golden crown placed on a molar. We can't flash a status card and get the latest Prada lenses.

Unlike the American Express credit card, membership doesn't have its privileges. At least, it doesn't have the privileges the myths would have you believe.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/indian-status-5-more-things-you-need-to-know-1.3109451>

3 First Nations mull court action to stop Algonquins of Ontario modern treaty

[National News](#) | June 18, 2015 by [Jorge Barrera](#)



Jorge Barrera

APTN National News

Three Algonquin First Nations are contemplating court action to stop the Algonquins of Ontario's modern-day treaty negotiations in its tracks.

Wolf Lake, Eagle Village and Timiskaming Algonquin First Nations, which sit in Quebec, say 855,271 acres in overlap territory in Ontario is at stake.

“(Court action) is what it is looking like,” said Wolf Lake First Nation Chief Harry St. Denis. “In the end we have to protect our interests on what we consider is our Aboriginal title territory.”

The lead negotiator for the Algonquins of Ontario (AOO) initialed the agreement-in-principle (AIP) with Ottawa and Queen's Park last week. The AOO is made up of 10 communities, but only one, Pikwakanagan, is a First Nation with reserve lands.

The AIP proposes to transfer \$300 million in capital funding and 117,500 acres of Ontario Crown lands into Algonquin hands.

The \$300 million, however, will likely not be distributed in lump sums among the signatories.

The initialing of the AIP is only a small step toward a final agreement which could still be years away from being finalized.

Wolf Lake, Eagle Village and Timiskaming, however, say the proposed deal threatens to extinguish their Aboriginal rights and title over territory in Ontario.

Eagle Village Chief Lance Haymond said many of his community's members are direct descendants of what used to be known as the Mattawa band across the provincial border in Ontario.

He said his First Nation's claimed territory includes portions of Algonquin Park and swaths up to the Trout Lake area.

"Through this process we have been excluded from having any say in any discussions on the Ontario side," said Haymond. "One Algonquin nation should not be able to extinguish the rights of other Algonquin nations that have rights to the territory."

The AOO group includes the Mattawa-North Bay First Nation, which is not a federally-listed First Nation but has been accepted as a legitimate entity for the sake of the negotiations by Queen's Park and Ottawa.

St. Denis said the AOO is merely a "policy fiction" that lacks the legitimacy of the real Algonquin nation.

"There is no such thing as the Algonquins of Ontario. It is the Algonquin nation and our territory is the Ottawa River watershed," he said. "They have all these different satellite groups with representatives from different areas that aren't recognized as Native people...It was something that was just invented to negotiate this claim."

Robert Potts, the lead negotiator for the AOO, said he's not losing any sleep over the threat of court action. He said, to his knowledge, Ottawa has consulted with the Algonquin's across the border in Quebec about the claim. He said the Quebec Algonquin communities refused to meet with the AOO because they don't recognize its legitimacy.

"These folks won't meet with us because there is a non-status component and they refuse to deal with non-status people," said Potts. "We have bent over backwards not to create any rifts. Unfortunately it takes two to involve discussions."

Potts said he was "saddened" by the opposition from the three Algonquin First Nations in Quebec, but their grievances would likely not get traction in the courts.

"It would be highly prejudicial to slow that process down. I think a court would see it that way. They are not moving as quickly as they could to deal with the governments who have made overtures to have those consultations," said Potts. "I am not particularly concerned about this initiative. I am saddened by it because it reflects a far too common

situation where First Nations find themselves on opposite sides of the fence they work on.”

Wolf Lake and Eagle Village have petitioned Pikwakanagan Chief Kirby Whiteduck and his council directly on the issue to little avail. The two chiefs from those communities sent a letter, dated June 12, to Whiteduck requesting a meeting with the Pikwakanagan council to discuss the issue.

The letter said Pikwakanagan received a formal notice from the two communities on the overlap issue two years ago.

“We are greatly concerned that no steps have been taken to address our concerns,” said the letter. “Therefore, our two Algonquin First Nations object in the strongest possible terms to the so-called ‘Algonquins of Ontario’ AIP being initialed by Mr. Robert Potts without first addressing our Algonquin Aboriginal Rights and Title...Our two Algonquin First Nations will take any and all necessary actions to ensure our rights, title and interests are protected from extinguishment via the so-called ‘Algonquins of Ontario.’”

Whiteduck, however, did inform the chiefs via telephone call of his band’s decision to authorize Potts to initial the AIP.

Whiteduck did not return *APTN*’s calls requesting comment.

According to the letter, Pikwakanagan proceeded with the initialling of the AIP following meetings with community family groups in Toronto, Ottawa and Kingston. The letter said only 160 people attended the meetings and a little over half of the attendees supported continuing with the initialling.

“Despite this apparent low threshold of support, you indicated that...you are publicly announcing Mr. Robert Potts is authorized to initial the AIP,” said the letter.

St. Denis said the First Nations will decide on their next steps during a meeting in July, but court action seems inevitable.

“Basically that is the only option left is to go to court,” said St. Denis. “It is still an option to consult with us, to have discussions with us...We could sit down with them as Algonquin people and discuss those issues without the federal and provincial governments there and work it out amongst us Algonquins. That is what I was hoping for. I guess it’s not going to happen.”

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/06/18/3-first-nations-mull-court-action-stop-algonquins-ontario-modern-treaty/>

Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

RCMP expected to release new report Wednesday on murdered, missing Indigenous women

[National News](#) | June 15, 2015 by [Jorge Barrera](#)



Jorge Barrera

APTN National News

The RCMP is expected to release a new report on murdered and missing Indigenous women Wednesday, according to a spokesperson.

The report will be an update on the federal police force's work on the file since last year's release of its National Overview on Murdered and Missing Aboriginal Women. That report revealed that 1,181 Indigenous women had been murdered or gone missing since 1980.

RCMP Sgt. Harold Pfeiderer said the report was set for release Wednesday afternoon during a press conference.

The update report was originally scheduled for release in May. It is expected to focus on the "next steps" identified in the 2014 initial report. The next steps included a focus on "enhancing efforts on unresolved cases." Almost half of missing and murdered Indigenous women cases fall under the jurisdiction of provincial or municipal police forces.

The RCMP also said it would be unveiling improvements on how it collects information on murder or missing persons cases which would now include Aboriginal origin as an identifier.

The update report, however, will not include information on the “ethnicity of the perpetrators of solved Aboriginal women homicides.”

Earlier this year, the RCMP said it would release a new report after it became embroiled in a controversy triggered by Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt over that issue.

Valcourt said during closed-door meeting [with some Alberta chiefs in March](#) that 70 per cent of the perpetrators linked to solved Indigenous women murder cases were also Indigenous.

The [Mounties initially refused to back Valcourt](#), stating it was against RCMP policy to reveal the ethnicity of perpetrators. [But as the controversy grew, RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson confirmed](#) the 70 per cent statistics in a letter to Treaty 6 Grand Chief Bernice Martial. Paulson said in the April 7 letter that consolidated data from 300 police agencies reviewed by the RCMP supported the statistic.

Paulson also said that in the cases of solved murders of Indigenous women, 25 per cent of the perpetrators were non-Indigenous and five per cent were of an unknown ethnicity.

Paulson, however, did not reveal any regional breakdowns or provide any information on what percentage of cases stemmed from cities versus on reserves.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/06/15/rcmp-expected-release-new-report-wednesday-murdered-missing-indigenous-women/>

Special Topic: Residential Schools & ‘60s Scoop

Canada’s aboriginal Truth and Reconciliation Report—the class issues

*By Carl Bronski and Keith Jones
13 June 2015*

The report issued last week by the government-appointed Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian residential schools documents a horrific crime perpetrated by the

Canadian capitalist ruling elite and its state—a crime whose impacts reverberate to this day.

For well over a century, beginning in the 1870s, Indian and Inuit children were systematically stolen from their parents and communities and placed in Church-run schools, generally hundreds, even thousands, of miles from their homes. There they endured prison-type conditions; were systematically denied proper medical treatment and nourishment, punished for speaking their native languages, and subject to physical and sexual abuse.

150,000 children—as many as one in every three aboriginal children in the first half of the 20th century—were captives of the government-enforced, Church-run residential school system. An estimated 6,000 died of disease, neglect, and abuse. Many were buried in unmarked graves with their parents not even informed of their deaths.

All with the aim, as the principal father of Confederation and Canada's Prime Minister for two decades (1867–73 and 1878–91) Sir John A. Macdonald, put it, of killing the Indian in the child.

That Macdonald played a pivotal role in the development of the residential school system is not accidental. It was an integral part of the consolidation of the Canadian nation-state, which he spearheaded, acting in close concert with a cabal of bankers, railway-promoters, and industrialists.

In the more than 300-page “Executive Summary” of its final report, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission concludes that the Indian residential school system was a “central element” in a century-long Canadian state Aboriginal policy that aimed “to eliminate Aboriginal governments; ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the Treaties; and through a process of assimilation, cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious and racial entities.” Terming this policy “cultural genocide” (i.e., the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group), the Commission found that the Canadian government pursued it, “because it wished to divest itself of” its “legal and financial obligations to Aboriginal people and gain control over their land and resources.” (For a more exhaustive discussion of the report's finding see: “[Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Report and the crimes against the native people](#)”)

The report makes 94 recommendations. Many of these are for increased state expenditure on health-care, education, housing, and child welfare, so as to help lift Canada's aboriginal people out of the Third World-type conditions that prevail on most native reserves and, increasingly, in the urban ghettos many now call home. A host of other recommendations revolve around commemorating the victims of the residential school system and making Canadians aware of this historic injustice. The Commissioners also reiterated longstanding demands of Canada's aboriginal elite for increased legal-constitutional recognition of, and powers for, native self-governments, and for the speedy and equitable resolution of land claims.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report has undoubtedly shocked and disturbed working people. Not only has this monstrous crime been ignored and covered up, meaning that prior to last week most Canadians knew little if anything about the residential school system. The report flies in the face of the official Canadian nationalist narrative which portrays Canada as a “kinder, gentler,” and “more-caring” society—one fundamentally different from the rapacious dollar-republic to the south. This narrative, to be sure, has been increasingly exposed as a sham, as Canada’s ruling elite rallies behind one US-led war after another and guts public and social services. But it is sustained by powerful social interests and appetites.

The Harper government’s assault on native people

Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his Conservative government are clearly intent on burying the TRC report and its finding that Canada committed “cultural genocide.” On the pretext that his government awaits publication later this fall of the remaining six volumes of the commission’s report, Harper has baldly refused to respond to the “Executive Summary” or its recommendations.

Harper could not entirely turn his back on the TRC last week. After all, his government had formed it, as part of a 2007 settlement of a class-action suit brought by residential-school survivors against Ottawa and its Church partners. But the prime minister sat stonily silent through the official proceedings marking the termination of the TRC’s work and when questioned about the report in parliament had the gall to say that Canada has one of the world’s best records on the treatment of indigenous peoples. Harper, whose general demeanor suggests nothing so much as a calculating, vindictive accountant, further claimed that his government has spent “vast amounts of money” on improving the lives of Canada’s native population.

In fact the Conservatives government has systematically attacked Canada’s aboriginal people as part of its offensive against the working class as whole. This offensive has included massive social spending cuts, an increase in the retirement age, further cuts to jobless benefits, the effective outlawing of strikes in the federally-administered industries, and a dramatic expansion of the powers of the national-security apparatus.

Harper has cut billions from programs that benefit native people, beginning with his government’s repudiation of the commitments made by the previous Liberal government under the 2005 “Kelowna Accord.” Central to the Conservative government’s agenda has been the push to develop new mineral deposits in the Canadian North and pipeline-projects that will transport Alberta tar-sands oil to U.S. and Asian markets over the strenuous objections of indigenous groups. Under legislation passed in 2012, the Conservatives made changes to the Indian Act and Navigable Waters Act that open the way for the de facto privatization of native lands and significantly reduce environmental protection.

The world capitalist crisis and opposition from native communities have impeded the government’s plans. But in a spate of policy papers, think-tank reports and academic

studies, the Conservatives and their big business and neo-conservative supporters have explained that their goal is to integrate the native Indian reserves much more fully into contemporary Canadian capitalism, including throwing them open to private land ownership, so as to more profitably exploit their natural resources and pools of cheap-labour.

If Harper and his government are publicly dismissive and privately disdainful of the TRC report, it is because they view it as cutting across this predatory agenda.

The opposition parties and the TRC

The opposition parties, joined by a significant section of the capitalist press have taken a different tack.

The NDP and the Liberals were quick to endorse the report and its recommendations. Liberal leader Justin Trudeau went so far as to pledge that a Liberal government would enact all 94.

There is a huge dollop of cynicism and hypocrisy in this.

When last in power federally, the Liberals implemented the greatest social spending cuts in Canadian history and all but completely ignored the 440 recommendations outlined in the 1996 final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People. That commission had been set up to contain mounting native discontent as exemplified by the 1991 Oka crisis, which had ended with the Canadian army suppressing a Mohawk occupation of ancestral lands that were being transformed into a private golf course.

While the NDP has never held office in Ottawa, its provincial governments, including the current Manitoba NDP government, have presided over appalling conditions for native people, on- and off-reserve.

Moreover, both parties are committed to balanced budgets and maintaining the reactionary fiscal framework, established by decades of federal Liberal and Conservatives governments, under which corporate taxes and income and capital gains taxes for the rich and super-rich have been reduced to record lows. Should they come to power, the Liberals' and NDP's claims of support for the TRC's call for a major boost in social spending to alleviate the social misery of Canada's native people will prove to have been a cruel hoax.

In the wake of the TRC report and the litany of horrors it has documented, the mainstream press has published statements abhorring the treatment of native children in the residential schools. However, the editorials and commentary have pointedly skirted the central issue of funding a massive expansion of public and social services for the Aboriginal population, preferring to concentrate on the need for public apologies from various political and church entities and reconciliation.

This is not to suggest there are no differences within Canada's ruling elite. In his push for resource development and neo-liberal "reform" of the reserve system, Harper has repeatedly clashed with those hitherto recognized by Ottawa as Canada's native leadership, such as the Assembly of First Nations. By contrast, those ready to commend the TRC report, including the NDP and Liberal politicians, generally favour the continuation of policies first elaborated in the 1970s and 1980s to give Canadian capitalism's continuing oppression of the native people an ostensibly more humane face, through the promotion of native "self-government" and land-claim negotiations.

This section of the elite notes Harper has manifestly failed to realize his pipeline-building plans. Furthermore, like Harper, they are acutely aware of mounting discontent among native people. (Reports made available by leaks and access-to-information requests, reveal that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and other state agencies have repeatedly warned of the threat of widespread native social unrest.)

Those sections of Canada's elite who are embracing the TRC report hope to use it to carry out something of a course correction. They favour relying more on the aboriginal elite nurtured over the past four decades and propose to do so by more systematically incorporating them into government and into resource development. The three TRC Commissioners—Manitoba Justice Murray Sinclair, journalist and broadcast executive Marie Wilson, and lawyer and former Conservative MP Chief Wilton Littlechild—are themselves representatives of this aboriginal elite and their report is imbued with the perspective of "reconciling" the native population with Canadian capitalism.

Justice McLachlin and Canada's "most glaring blemish"

In this regard, it is highly significant that just five days before the public release of the TRC report, the head of Canada's Supreme Court, Justice Beverly McLachlin, delivered a major address in which she affirmed that Canada's treatment of the native people had been tantamount to "cultural genocide"—in effect endorsing the TRC's central conclusion in advance.

A Supreme Court Justice since 1989, McLachlin has been involved in a series of Supreme Court decisions that delimit "native land rights" and "self-government." These decisions are aimed at giving legal imprimatur to the dispossession of the native peoples and are serving to fashion a modern-day system of native self-government that is fully-incorporated into the Canadian capitalist state and, as such, an instrument for the further dissolution of traditional communal land and its transformation into capitalist private property.

In her May 28 speech McLachlin termed the treatment of the First Nations "the most glaring blemish" on Canada's historic record as a "peaceful multi-cultural country"—a statement that typifies the attitude of the ostensibly progressive section of Canada's elite to the TRC and the continuing plight of the native people.

In reality, the dispossession of the indigenous population was not a blemish, nor a birth pang. It was integral to the rise of Canadian capitalism and the consolidation of the Canadian nation-state. Moreover, it lays bare the violent and oppressive character of the Canadian state, as the instrument of organized violence for upholding capitalist exploitation, to this day. Canadian capitalism's rise involved the destruction of aboriginal society—a genocide—because the communal relations on which aboriginal society was based were incompatible with the imposition of capitalist private property.

The last four decades of land rights struggles, based on the acceptance of capitalism and the promotion of native nationalism with a view to negotiating a new “relationship” with the Canadian state, have led native people into a political and social dead end. Self-government and land-claim settlements have nurtured a small elite that manages the reserves for six-figure salaries and is immersed in business deals, from construction and transport to casinos and cigarette smuggling, while hundreds, and in some cases thousands, of their fellow band members live in abject poverty.

Ending the historic oppression of the native people, like securing the social and democratic rights of all working people, will only be possible through the independent political mobilization of the working class to reorganize society from top to bottom along socialist lines.

Direct Link: <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2015/06/13/ctrc-j13.html>

60's Scoop topic of forum in Saskatoon Friday evening

Redress sought for mass adoption of aboriginal children into non-aboriginal families

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 13, 2015 5:30 AM CT Last Updated: Jun 13, 2015 5:30 AM CT



Raven Sinclair gives an historical overview of the 60's Scoop, the era of mass adoptions of aboriginal children by non-aboriginal families, at a forum in Saskatoon. (Kathy Fitzpatrick/CBC)

It's called the 60's Scoop — the widespread adoption of aboriginal children into non-aboriginal families.

Friday evening it was the topic of a forum in Saskatoon.

Organizers said they want to raise awareness about another chapter in the history of assimilation. Some go so far as to call it cultural genocide.

"We've been trying to organize and get our voices heard for a long time, probably going on at least 20 years because as we all became aware of what had happened, that we weren't isolated incidents, we started to connect with each other," Raven Sinclair said in an interview.

The main speaker at the event, Sinclair is both an adoptee and a social work professor who has researched and written on the topic extensively.

'There is something fundamentally wrong here'- *Raven Sinclair, Adoptee and Professor*

From the 1960's to the mid-1980's thousands of First Nations children in Canada were apprehended by social welfare authorities, and placed in foster homes or adopted out.

Sinclair said some cases were poorly documented, some papers were even forged.

The result was a disproportionate number of First Nations children in the child welfare system. By 1994 in Saskatchewan, eight per cent of children in the province were First Nations, but 75 per cent of the children in care were First Nations.

"There is something fundamentally wrong here," Sinclair told the gathering of about 60 people.

The adoptions were often disastrous, involving abuse and loss of language and culture.

Sister and brother pair sent to U.S.

Victoria Hutto and her younger brother were taken from their family in La Ronge, their grandmother told they needed medical attention so she would sign for their adoption, she told the crowd.

After four years in foster care, they were adopted out to a couple in Norfolk, Virginia. She was 12, her brother 10.

"I didn't really know how to fit in," Hutto said.

She said her adoptive father, who served in the U.S. Navy, was away a lot. And her adoptive mother was "hateful toward us".

Lost connections

At the age of 14, Hutto (born Rose Edna Natomagan) ran away, married and had a family of her own. She returned to Canada about 11 years ago to be closer to her biological family, and has three grandchildren she has never met.

Meanwhile, she said her brother became homeless and addicted. He was fatally stabbed during a fight. Hutto did not have enough money to go to his funeral.

The organizer of the forum, Lynn Thompson, said she is simply hoping for public support and acknowledgement for victims of the 60's Scoop.

She runs a support group that meets twice a month in Saskatoon.

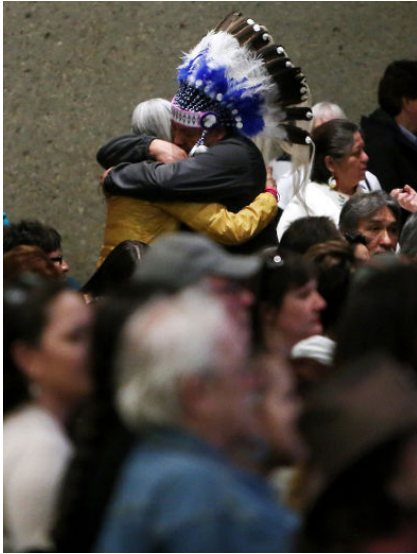
Thompson is also part of a class action lawsuit filed of their behalf by the Merchant Law Group.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/60-s-scoop-topic-of-forum-in-saskatoon-friday-evening-1.3112302>

Parenting key to Truth and Reconciliation - MILLS

By [Tom Mills](#), Sault Star

Friday, June 12, 2015 10:48:02 EDT PM



If the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report is a call to action, a very good place to start would be repairing First Nations family and parenting skills.

Residential schools cause huge damage to family dynamics that persists through the generations and has tremendous social and financial costs.

As the report understates it, residential schools “adversely affected parenting skills” by ensuring large numbers of young people grew up largely without families.

Most of us learn how to parent from our own families.

But these children scooped from their homes and societies to live in residential schools “never knew a parent,” singer and activist Buffy Sainte-Marie noted recently.

“How were they supposed to know how a family works?”

Worse, she said, with their world often populated by abusive adults, “what they learned was how to be a bullying nun, how to be a pedophile priest.”

Denied parental love and without positive role models, many school survivors couldn’t summon up parenting skills in adulthood.

“I brought them up in a pretty horrible way . . . didn’t know how to parent, didn’t know how to show love,” Peguis First Nation elder Josie Bear said at an early commission event.

“I have a son that is constantly in and out of jail. Why? Because I was a crappy father,” said Ray Mason, president of the National Residential School Survivors’ Society.

These are familiar stories. And the parenting problems persist, handed down through generations.

“Many descendants of residential school survivors share the same burdens as their ancestors even if they did not attend the schools themselves. These include transmitted personal trauma and compromised family systems,” notes a report by the Indigenous Foundation at University of British Columbia.

While some First Nations families are rock solid and some Aboriginal people are excellent parents, the society overall remains damaged in this respect.

“The intergenerational impact of the residential school experience has left some families without strong role models for parenting,” the report declares.

A Statistics Canada study in 2011 found 3.6% of First Nations children aged 14 or under were in foster care, compared to 0.3% of their non-Aboriginal counterparts.

The fact that a lot of foster care for First Nations children is provided in non-Aboriginal homes is understandably a sore point, a constant echo of the cultural genocide of the residential school era.

“The doors are closed at the residential schools but . . . our children are still being taken away,” said Old Crow Chief Norma Kassi at a TRC event.

“Canada’s child-welfare system has simply continued the assimilation that the residential school system started,” the report said.

So it calls on Ottawa to affirm the right of Aboriginal governments to set up their own child-welfare agencies, require that placements of children be culturally appropriate and compel courts and agencies to “take the residential school legacy into account.”

But there’s no magic wand for that.

First Nations-run family service agencies already exist in many areas, including Algoma. Yet mainstream Children’s Aid Societies continue to have large caseloads of Aboriginal children. It remains a challenge to find good foster homes and adoptive families in a society left with a parenting and family deficit by the residential school era.

Perhaps that’s why the report also called upon all levels of government, including Aboriginal ones, to develop parenting programs for First Nations families.

Such educational programs have “the potential to improve parenting skills and enable more children to grow up safely in their own families and communities,” the report notes.

Practically speaking, education can be less costly than fostering or adoption processes, not to mention than dealing with the consequences when damaged children grow up.

But this doesn't mean imposing non-Aboriginal parenting and family models on Aboriginal societies, which might be seen as another form of colonialism.

The report calls for them to be “culturally appropriate,” which I assume would involve restoring and emphasizing traditional practices and structures of Aboriginal family life that might differ from those of other Canadians.

Preschool education programs would also “address the deficit,” the report notes. Data from 2011 indicates 78% of Aboriginal kids up to age five have no access to licensed daycare, let alone early childhood education programs.

The report calls for efforts to address this.

Both Batchewana and Garden River First Nations have child care centres offering day care for preschoolers as well as before-and-after-school programs for school-aged kids up to age 12.

Doubtless these Aboriginal-run programs would be considered culturally appropriate.

But many others First Nations families, especially in remote areas, lack those vital services.

If the historical realities presented so vividly during the Truth and Reconciliation process evoke deep regret, the resulting report offers hope.

The challenge for Canadians will be to prioritize and implement solutions to the problems caused by grievous mistakes in our past.

Surely parenting deserves high priority.

Direct Link: <http://www.saultstar.com/2015/06/12/parenting-key-to-truth-and-reconciliation---mills>

Aboriginals push to save former Ontario residential school known as ‘mush hole’

The Six Nations reserve in Brantford and former students want to save a historic building that was a residential school.



Former Mohawk Institute Indian Residential School students, from left, Tony Bomberly, Blanche Hill-Easton, Bev Albrecht, Audrey Hill, Diane Hill, Roberta Hill and John Elliott pose for a photo in front of their old school in Brantford on Friday.

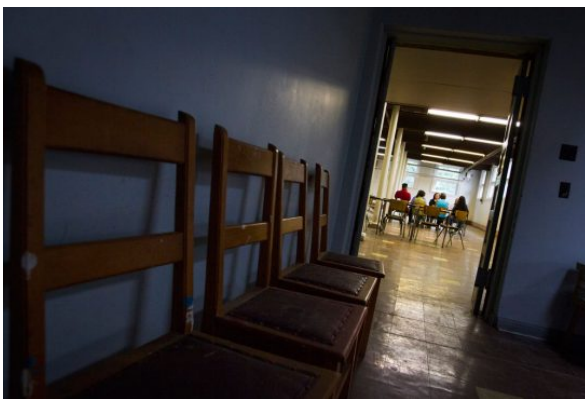
By: [Donovan Vincent](#) News reporter, Published on Sat Jun 13 2015

Some of the youngsters were locked up in cells like animals or beaten severely, and everyone had to eat oatmeal, day and night.

But former students of the [Mohawk Institute Indian Residential School](#) in Brantford, like Audrey Hill, still want to preserve the building that housed these horrors decades ago.

“At first I was so very ashamed (of the building). I would have been one of the people saying ‘why would you save that?’ Now, I’m completely supportive of saving it,” says Hill, 61, a Mohawk who was sent to the now defunct residential school at age 10 by her mother.

Known at the time as the “mush hole” — a nickname given by aboriginal students who were forced to eat mushy oatmeal all day — the building stands for everything that was wrong with Canada’s residential school system: brutal racism, forced assimilation, and utter disdain for indigenous culture, customs and language.



Former students reminisce inside the cafeteria of their old school.

Operating as a residential school beginning around 1834 and closed in 1970, it's one of the few remaining structures from that era still standing in this country, and was one of the oldest continuously operated Anglican residential schools in Canada.

Now there's a ["save the evidence"](#) move afoot to restore and keep the building going as a place for people to tour and learn about the sad but relevant history of Canada's residential schools.

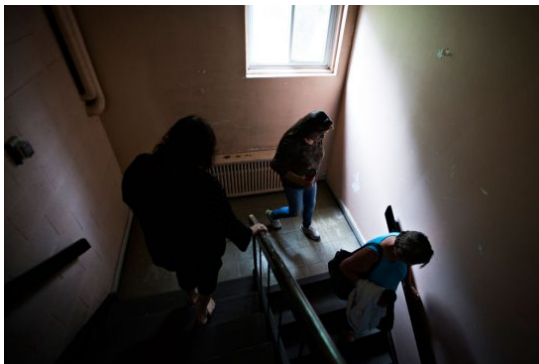
Proponents of saving the building include the majority of residents on the Six Nations reserve in Brantford, of which Hill is a community member.

The building sits on Six Nations territory within Brantford and used to be owned by Ottawa, but the federal government turned it over to the reserve in 1971. It's now called the Woodland Cultural Centre, an aboriginal non-profit charity devoted to indigenous art, history and culture that is spearheading the fundraising initiative.

Six Nations leaders approached their community to gauge interest in saving the building.

"Some wanted it burned down, but the majority wanted to keep it," says Six Nations Chief Ava Hill (no relation to Audrey).

So the reserve's elected council voted last year to put \$220,000 of its funds toward a \$1-million roof repair for the building, and has approached the city of Brantford for matching funds.



Sisters Audrey Hill (left) and Diane Hill (centre), with their aunt Roberta Hill, walk the halls of the Brantford school. All three women were students there.

That request is now before the city's finance committee after being referred, but a councillor who chairs the budget committee says the Six Nations community should use its own funds or approach the federal government.

"It's a building that they've allowed to fall into disrepair," says Brantford Councillor Dan McCreary.

"You can't be unsympathetic to the plight of the folks who went to the school and their kids. However, we do have a financial responsibility to our people here in Brantford.

There's a heck of a lot of municipal roofs that need replacing in the next 10 years, and that's got to take precedence over funding an initiative like this, worthy as it may be," McCreary said in an interview.

Brantford Mayor Chris Friel supports funding the project. He told the local Brantford newspaper that the city played a large role in what happened at the residential school and, from a heritage and history point of view, it's important to protect the building.

But the city would have to vote to approve such a move if the finance committee ends up supporting it.

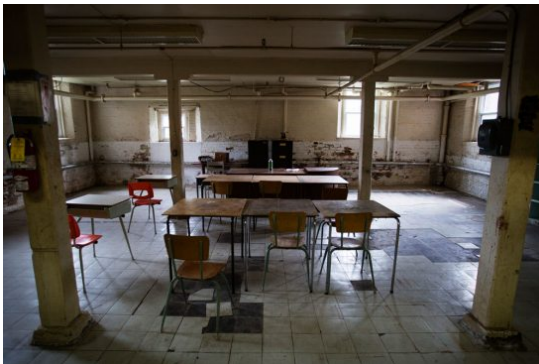
Interest in the building has grown for the past several years as the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#) heard moving testimonials from survivors of Canada's 130 residential schools. The commission wrapped up its work earlier this month and issued a [damning report](#) nearly 400 pages long detailing the history and abuses in the schools.

The report notes that the Mohawk Institute was one of the residential schools known for operating "punishment rooms" for its students.

After a 1907 inspection of the Mohawk Institute, the Ontario inspector for Indian agencies, J.G. Ramsden, reported: "I cannot say that I was favourably impressed with the sight of two prison cells in the boys() play house," the Truth and Reconciliation Commission document notes.

Ramsden continued: "I was informed, however, that these were for pupils who ran away from the institution, confinement being for a week at a time when pupils returned."

The report goes on to note that in 1914, a father successfully sued the Mohawk Institute's principal. The father's daughter had been locked in a cell for three days on what was described as a "water diet."



A basement room at the former Mohawk Institute Indian Residential School.

Audrey Hill, who was sent to the school with her five siblings after her parents separated and her mom struggled financially, vividly recalls the constant diet at the school of soggy, slimy oatmeal that came with the occasional cube of sugar.

“That’s all the kids ate,” she says in an interview.

She also remembers the beatings.

One evening she got sick and was unable to do her homework. The next morning her teacher, upon learning Hill didn’t do the school work, grabbed Hill out of her chair in class, shook her and slapped her in the face a few times.

Hill remembers starting to say “but” in a bid to explain herself, and the teacher yelling in reply: “Anything you say after but is nothing but an excuse.”

When her financial circumstances improved, Hill’s mother came for her children a year after they entered the school.

One of Hill’s siblings alleges being sexually assaulted at the school and brought forward a claim for damages through an assessment process established under the [Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement](#) — the same class-action pact between churches, former students, aboriginal groups and Ottawa that established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.



Names of students were carved into the bricks outside.

The large, four-floor building housed the dormitories and a few classrooms for male and female aboriginal students from several communities, including Sarnia, Scugog, Stoney Point and Saugeen. There was also a kitchen, cafeteria and laundry room.

A smaller, adjacent building where the classrooms were has been converted into a museum and fine arts gallery and the centre’s administrative office.

Amos Key Jr., a Mohawk and acting executive director of the Woodland Cultural Centre, says aside from the roof repair there are also plans to fundraise to establish an endowment for the main building and repurpose it as a museum.

Key says the fundraising initiative has plans to reach out to the federal government, the local chamber of commerce and other entities.

“One (Mohawk Institute) survivor told me you can’t appreciate what went on in this building by just standing in front of a plaque. That’s what’s driving me, that comment,” Key says of the fundraising initiative.

Hill wholeheartedly supports the preservation effort.

“I love it. I’m all for educating Canadians about what happened to us there,” she says.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/06/13/aboriginals-push-to-save-former-ontario-residential-school-known-as-mush-hole.html>

Letting TRC report die a big risk

By: Douglas Bland

Posted: **06/15/2015 3:00 AM**

The report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is without question the most comprehensive description of the past and present reality of the First Nations and the political bedlam that underpins Canadians' relations with our native citizens. Its 94 far-reaching recommendations meant to redress past failures and abuses may someday propel Canadian/First Nations people towards a fairer future together.

We have, however, travelled this road to nowhere before. Impressive reports, such as the 1997 Royal Commission on Aboriginal People and the 2007 Residential Schools Settlement Agreement for instance, are now mostly forgotten. Yet today Canadians face many of the same issues many assume had been settled by these earlier much celebrated accords.

It is not the lack of sound ideas and recommendations that have held our societies in an endless, evermore hostile deadlock. Rather, it is the failure of commissioners and political leaders on both sides to put words into action.

Deeply researched public policy studies, parliamentary "white papers" and inquiries may provide policy guidance for governments, but it is the rules, norms and officials within administrative structures that create and guard actual policy outcomes.

There is no central agency or department in Ottawa that could possibly manage the implementation of the TRC's recommendations. Notwithstanding the hard work and brilliant analysis of the TRC, we have no practical ideas or recommendations about what a comprehensive, presumably permanent, policy structure meant to manage and hold on course their ideas and recommendations might look like. Putting this in the hands of the federal bureaucracy might produce some very odd results or no results at all.

Under the usual processes, Canadians should expect the federal government to conduct a review of the TRC recommendations through an exchange of views and assessments

between the commission's follow-on bureaucracy and federal officials. Though the process might engage the First Nations or a representative body such as the Assembly of First Nations, such an engagement is not necessary, because the government will be answering to the TRC and not the First Nations or their representative. It is a process that has failed First Nations fundamentally in every other such situation because the federal reviews of such inquiries inevitably concentrate on the government's interests and First Nations, at best, are viewed as second-order interveners.

The federal government has to set aside the notion it knows best how to manage the dependent First Nations. The TRC presents an opportunity to create a new Canada/First Nations policy structure designed not only to deal with the TRC recommendations, but also manage our relations with the First Nations. That requires the immediate inclusion of First Nations in any deciding how to respond to the TRC findings.

Such an approach might seem radical or so complicated it might derail the government's response altogether. Moving to direct negotiations with First Nations, however, would not require a revolution in Canada's approach: the building blocks for a modern Canada/First Nations relationship already exist. The Constitutional Act, 1982, "recognized and affirmed" the existing treaty rights of First Nations. Canada also recognized "... that the aboriginal people of Canada have (an inherent) right to govern themselves in relation to matters that are integral to their communities, integral to their unique cultures, identities, traditions, languages and institutions with respect to their special relationships to their land and resources."

Such a joint-response approach could be the first step towards building an entirely new relationship with First Nations in an alliance based on their inherent right to self-government.

History is rarely kind to squabbling people. The likely unfortunate outcome for the TRC recommendations is that they will lose momentum over the summer and as the public turns its mind to the approaching federal election. If this is the fate of the TRC, it will become another source of grievance within the First Nations communities.

Canadians, however, ought to be cautious in their own interests. The young, fast growing, and increasingly uncompromising First Nations and their leaders are not about to retreat peacefully from their demand that Canada recognize their inherent rights. To put the matter squarely before Canadians, First Nations are determined to assert their inherent rights and they have the means to force the issue if necessary. Canadians had best not test that determination.

Douglas Bland is professor emeritus at Queen's University and author of Time Bomb: Canada and the First Nations.

Direct Link: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/analysis/letting-trc-report-die-a-big-risk-307331051.html>

Manitoba residential school survivor, teacher reunite after 50 years

'You were 1 of the best teachers I had,' Merle Scatch says of Verna Kirkness

By Donna Carreiro, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 15, 2015 4:30 AM CT Last Updated: Jun 15, 2015 10:35 AM CT

"Tansi ...Tansi!"

It was a simple Cree greeting between a former student and her teacher, but it packed an emotional punch, unleashing decades of haunting memories and healing tears. Such was the impact of the salutation that reunited Merle Scatch, a residential school survivor, and Verna Kirkness, one of Scatch's former teachers.

"I feel emotional, because you were caring," Scatch told Kirkness at this month's reunion. "I hate going back to my past but you were always there. You were one of the best teachers I had in that residential school."



Merle Scatch (left) had Verna Kirkness (right) as a teacher in the residential school she attended as a child. The two reconnected for the first time in decades last week. (CBC)

Scatch, from Cross Lake First Nation, spent most of her childhood years at a Norway House residential school and most of them were, by her own account, horrible. Most often, she said, she makes an effort never to talk about it, let alone recall it.

'I felt kindness in that smile. The day I got to know her, everything changed for me, that there are some kind people in the world.' - Merle Scatch

The memories are all too painful; like those of the ongoing sexual assaults, where the resident doctor would repeatedly "touch me where you are not supposed to." And the ongoing beatings with a thick leather belt, administered as punishment for everything from eating food without permission to crying out loud (because the beatings hurt so badly).

But the ultimate crime was to speak Cree in the classrooms.

"Speaking Cree, we got the strap," Scatch said. "That strap made my hands and fingers purple and swollen. Sometimes, I had a hard time to do writing because I couldn't even bend my fingers."

It was for that reason that Scatch automatically stiffened in fear one morning in seventh grade, when she realized she'd been busted speaking Cree to her classmate. The teacher, new to the school, approached Scatch and bent over. But instead of a strapping, she gave them a smile. And even more startling to the girls, this new teacher also spoke Cree.

"I was just shocked," Scatch said. "And her smile. I felt kindness in that smile. The day I got to know her, everything changed for me, that there are some kind people in the world."

50 years on

Fast forward to present day. Almost 50 years has passed. Scatch, now a mother and grandmother, always wondered whether she'd ever see Kirkness again, whether she'd ever get the chance to thank her for that kindness.

Kirkness, meanwhile, went on to become a nationwide advocate for indigenous youth who want to pursue higher education. But she remembered those days as a residential school teacher and she remembered Merle Scatch.

So when the two finally reconnected last week, it was a reunion of tears, laughter and their native language.

"As a teacher, you don't know what effect you're having on the students and I'm here in tears," Kirkness said to Scatch. "I grew up knowing my language and I certainly had no intention of stopping anyone from talking Cree. I loved my language, you know? And if they were talking Cree that was just fine."

Kirkness also said she wishes she'd known then, as a naive new teacher, about the abuses silently going on behind her back, in other classrooms and dorms.

"It is sad to hear," Kirkness told CBC News. "Sometimes we weren't aware of everything that went on in the dorms. If some of us, native teachers especially, [made] a difference, I'm happy to hear [that]."

It was at that moment that both teacher and student began to cry again. And laugh. And speak Cree. And as they made plans to meet in person this weekend, Scatch reiterated the impact of that tender moment in an otherwise turbulent time.

"Miss Verna Kirkness is what we called her then and she still is today," Scatch said.

"I learned from her that education is important, and I encourage my own grandchildren to continue their education and never to lose their Cree."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-residential-school-survivor-teacher-reunite-after-50-years-1.3113270>

Metis president unhappy with Manitoba's '60s Scoop apology, lack of consultation

By: Chinta Puxley, The Canadian Press

Posted: **06/15/2015 12:34 PM** | Last Modified: 06/15/2015 3:23 PM | [Comments:](#)

WINNIPEG - Manitoba's Metis federation says its people are being left out of an apology to come this week for aboriginal children who were taken from their homes and placed with non-aboriginal families.

President David Chartrand said no one from the Manitoba government consulted with the Metis or formally invited him to the event set for Thursday at the legislature. The Metis were left out of the residential school settlement and it feels like the same thing is happening again, he said.

Manitoba appears to be blaming Ottawa for what is known as the '60s Scoop when it was provincial social workers who seized aboriginal children and placed them with families as far away as the southern United States, Chartrand said in an interview.

"It's the province that took our children. It's the province that sold our children to the United States and other places. It's the province that did harm to my families.

"Clearly we're not going to let the province get away from this."

Premier Greg Selinger is set to deliver an apology to aboriginal adoptees in what is thought to be the first by a Canadian province. The substance of the apology has not been released, but Selinger said it will acknowledge damage done to those taken from their homes and their culture.

Paul McKie, spokesman for Selinger, said numerous aboriginal organizations have been invited to witness the apology. The Manitoba Metis Federation was invited Friday by phone, by email and formally by letter, he said.

The province, along with affected adoptees, has been working on the apology for months, he said.

"Many people, groups and organizations have been invited," McKie said. "There were informal consultations with many people."

From the 1960s to the 1980s, thousands of aboriginal children were taken from their homes by child-welfare services and placed with non-aboriginal families. Adoptees have been fighting for recognition of their experience and a formal apology similar to that given to survivors of residential schools. Many have filed class-action lawsuits in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

An apology without a plan and proper consultation with those affected is empty, said Chartrand, who has worked with '60s Scoop adoptees and their families for years.

"You can't just say 'I'm sorry' and walk away. You did permanent damage here. You tore entire communities apart. Maybe they're thinking if they say 'I'm sorry' that ends my responsibility."

Grand Chief David Harper, with Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak which represents northern First Nations, still remembers children being taken away from his community, never to be seen again. He said he will be there to witness the apology but will also be looking for more.

Many adoptees are still trying to find their roots, he said. They need counselling and help with repatriation, he said.

"I'm very glad that the premier is doing the honourable thing," Harper said. "But words are one thing. Action is another. What kind of action is there for these people?"

Direct Link: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/canada/metis-president-unhappy-with-manitobas-60s-scoop-apology-lack-of-consultation-307396441.html>

Manitoba adoptees', birth parents' identities revealed under new legislation

'I was always considered adopted, I wasn't considered family,' says Vernon Henry, 72

By Wawmeesh G. Hamilton, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 15, 2015 4:30 AM CT Last Updated: Jun 15, 2015 5:09 PM CT

Vernon Henry always knew he was different.

As a boy, the now 72-year-old man wandered around Winnipeg and Brandon, often returning home at night to parents who never asked where he'd been.

Then at approximately six years old, his parents explained why he was different.

"They told me that I was adopted," he said. "I was always considered adopted. I wasn't considered family."

Henry constantly wrestled with questions like who he was and where he was from.

Later, as an adult, he discovered his identity but couldn't prove who he was.

Meet the parents

But all that changes on June 15.

Henry is one of hundreds of Manitobans who are affected by new legislation that allows adoptees and birth parents to discover each other's identities.



Vernon Henry, 72, will now be able to prove to the Manitoba Métis Federation that he belongs. Changes to the province's pre-adoption records law has enabled Henry and thousands of other adoptees and birth parents to now know each other's identities. (Wawmeesh G. Hamilton)

"Today validates who I feel I am and it just makes my life easier," he said.

The department of adoption and post-adoption programs with Manitoba Family Services is reading more than 1,000 applications to access birth records, said manager Janice Knight.

Brenda Harll was the first to get her birth records Monday.

"I did it! I really did it!" she said.

"This for me gives me the roots ... I feel were taken away from me."

The process to change legislation started in 1997.

It resulted in a new adoption act of 1999 in which only records after that year could be opened. The new legislation makes all records dating back to 1925 accessible.

But the access isn't absolute. Both sides can file vetoes to maintain privacy.

More than 400 adoptees have consistently lobbied the province to amend its adoption record laws since the new act was adopted in 1999.

Those 400 people have been placed in a special category and will be the first to access their records on June 15, Knight said.

The '60s Scoop

Thousands of indigenous children were taken from their parents in the 1960s and 1970s and adopted by white families, often out of province. This deliberate political choice was later coined the "Sixties Scoop."

Knight wouldn't estimate how many indigenous adoptees were affected, but unofficial numbers range from 3,000 to 5,000 children.

Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger is expected to apologize to indigenous victims of the scoop later this week.

According to Knight, her agency's biggest challenge is dealing with the birth records of indigenous children who were adopted out of Manitoba.

Those records are now accessible, Knight said.

The legislation also allows indigenous and federal governments to access adoptees' information to verify lineage for programs, services and benefits.

An unfinished life

For some adoptees, the dream of meeting their birth parents is gone forever.



Peter Froese, 53, was one of between 3,000 and 5,000 Manitoba indigenous children caught in what's known as the 'Sixties Scoop' and placed in white homes. (Wawmeesh G. Hamilton)

Peter Froese, 53, was taken during the Sixties Scoop and adopted by a Mennonite family.

After he grew up, his adopted mother gave him some of his birth information.

He had part of the picture, but it was only after he married that his wife helped him trace his roots to Roseau River, Man. The revelation was bitter sweet.

Froese's birth mother was murdered in the 1980s. He never found his birth father.

He did however find biological aunts. He's also found two sisters and three brothers.

Froese's only connection to the woman who gave birth to him and felt his first breaths is a picture he received last year.

"I cried so hard because that was the first time I ever saw her," he said.

1 drop of blood is forever

Henry always wanted to be Tonto and never the Lone Ranger when he was a boy, he said.

After he grew up, he studied theology, and a yearning led him to take every aboriginal studies course he could.

I found out that I'm Métis and that's important to me. It's part of who I am.- *Vernon Henry*

And he also researched his family background. His adopted mother told him his identity but asked him not to follow through.

After her death, though, he did follow through. He discovered that he has other siblings and he also found his parents' graves.

Henry's research led him to a cousin who uncovered something else.

"I found out that I'm Métis and that's important to me. It's part of who I am," he said.

Henry said he knew his birth parents' identities but couldn't prove it when he first applied for his Métis card four years ago. On June 15, he'll be able to prove it and will apply again.

"As Métis say: 'one drop of blood is forever,'" he said.

Monday marks the end of a long chapter in Henry's life. It also marks the start of a new one.

"I'd like to be able to prove who I am before I die," he said. "To know now is a completion of my life."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-adoptees-birth-parents-identities-revealed-under-new-legislation-1.3111549>

Manitoba formally apologizes for mass adoption of aboriginal children

KATHRYN BLAZE CARLSON

The Globe and Mail

Published Thursday, Jun. 18, 2015 4:11AM EDT

Last updated Friday, Jun. 19, 2015 12:15AM EDT

Manitoba has become the first province to apologize for the mass adoption of aboriginal children into non-aboriginal families, a historic *mea culpa* that some survivors hope will spur other governments to follow suit.

Premier Greg Selinger rose in the provincial legislature Thursday and expressed regret for the so-called Sixties Scoop, a period widely regarded as connected to today's disproportionate number of aboriginal children in foster care.

"I would like to apologize on behalf of the Province of Manitoba for the Sixties Scoop," Mr. Selinger said, adding that the dark chapter, which stripped children of their culture

and identities, will be incorporated into the province's education curriculum. "It was a practice that has left intergenerational scars and cultural loss."

Child-welfare workers across the country removed thousands of aboriginal children from their homes and placed them with non-aboriginal families in Canada and the United States. The wide-scale apprehension extended beyond the 1960s, but that is the decade that saw the most adoptions, some of which led to physical and sexual abuse.

Maggie-Blue Waters, a Cree adoptee who was taken from her family in Northern Saskatchewan during the early 1960s, when she was four years old, said she hopes Manitoba's "brave" apology will raise awareness and spur similar action in other provinces.

"All that I have lived, [the Premier] just validated," she said from her home in central Saskatchewan, near where she was raised by a non-native couple who renamed her Joanne. "Today, I'm hearing it is okay to be indigenous."

The apology comes two weeks after the federal Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its damning report detailing the treatment of children in the government-funded, church-run Indian Residential School system, where physical, emotional and sexual abuse were rampant. The report, which said the forced assimilation amounted to "cultural genocide," called on governments to commit to reducing the number of aboriginal children in care, in part by working harder to keep families together.

Mr. Selinger said it is important to "acknowledge and appreciate" the meaning of the words "cultural genocide."

"The reality is that, like residential schools, the effects of the Sixties Scoop remain with us today," he said. "The human impact on families and communities are profound and cannot easily be reconciled."

Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized in 2008 for the horrific treatment of children in residential schools, and some survivors have received federal compensation for what they endured. Sixties Scoop adoptees have been fighting for similar recognition, with some joining class-action lawsuits in Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Tony Merchant, the lawyer representing claimants in the three Prairie provinces, said he will include the Premier's statement in his certification filings, which also name the federal government. The apology, he said, will inevitably improve the suits' chances of going forward because it shows "some basis in fact."

In a statement, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs cautioned that the sincerity of Mr. Selinger's remarks should be measured by the actions the province takes in the months and years to come. It also said the public apology marks a "private opportunity" for survivors to begin their healing.

For Ms. Waters, who remembers being apprehended outside her band office and dressed up for a photograph later shown to prospective adoptive parents, the apology is, indeed, a step toward reconciliation. "It's our time," she said.

But for others, such as Manitoba adoptee Christine Merasty, the statement is too little, too late.

She was taken from her mother in the early 1970s, when she was just four months old, and raised in rural Manitoba. Her mother was a residential school survivor and later became one of Canada's murdered and missing aboriginal women; her body was found on a highway outside Winnipeg.

"They didn't give my family a chance," Ms. Merasty said ahead of the apology. "I had a family searching for me for 20 years, wanting me."

With a report from The Canadian Press

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/manitoba-to-apologize-to-aboriginal-adoptees-thursday/article25012979/>

Sask groups act on reconciliation promises

By Betty Ann Adam, The StarPhoenix June 18, 2015

A brief, informal survey shows Saskatchewan churches, charities and government ministries are following through on pledges to commit acts of reconciliation that were made during the four-day closing ceremonies of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Here's a sampling:

Mayfair United Church participated in the Saskatoon closing ceremonies of the TRC and the Meewasin Valley United Church is organizing a canoe trip for Indigenous and non-Indigenous women to journey together toward healing. In addition to previous apologies to First Nations and to residential school survivors specifically, this year the United Church nationally issued a statement "Affirming Other Spiritual Paths" including Indigenous spiritualities, as holy and sacred, said Mitchell Anderson, a candidate for ordination. The church apologized for "attempting to outlaw and annihilate Indigenous spiritualities," and acknowledged the "grace and wisdom of Indigenous Elders."

The Saskatoon United Way helped fund the 2013 TRC national event in Saskatoon and this month's local closing ceremony event. It has increased the number of aboriginal community organizations it supports. It has had an aboriginal advisory committee for about 15 years and five years ago hired Ashley Kayseas as aboriginal liaison; she educates UW staff about residential schools and their negative effects. The UW urges

communitybased organizations to draw participation from aboriginal people to better reflect the makeup of the city among their volunteers, employees and board members. Five of the United Way's current board members are aboriginal.

The Office of the Children's Advocate held a twoday education session this week to start processing the 94 recommendations of the TRC and work on what it calls "reconcili 'action.' " At the heart of the workshop were principles of relating, restoring, truth-telling, acknowledging and how they connect to action. Advocate Bob Pringle said he hopes the TRC findings and recommendations will generate a more holistic understanding and meaningful change for aboriginal children and youth in all systems. "The Government of Saskatchewan will have a multiminsty team study the TRC report and "adopt practical solutions," according to a statement it issued on June 5. In 2007, Saskatchewan's education ministry was the first in Canada to implement mandatory treaty education for elementary and high school students. Treaty and First Nations and Métis histories are already taught in classrooms. Residential schools, specifically, are included in the curriculum in Grades 6 and 7, as well as Grade 12 Social Studies, Grade 10 Native Studies and

Grade 12 History. The ministry is also party to the Joint Task Force on improving education and employment outcomes for First Nations and Métis people.

Saskatoon Mayor Don Atchison is a member of the Big City Mayor's Caucus, which has resolved to explore TRC recommendations applicable to cities and come up with concrete actions. The City already does many of the things recommended, including flying the flag recognizing the city stands on Treaty Six Territory as well as the Metis Nation flag. Former Treaty Commissioner Cliff Wright was previously Saskatoon's mayor and the City has long offered aboriginal cultural awareness to all employees, but has also made it mandatory for police staff. It works with aboriginal education institutions to improve representation among civic staff. The City also hosted the TRC's 2012 national event and a local TRC closing event.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/life/Sask+groups+reconciliation+promises/11146364/story.html>

Manitoba Metis upset by lack of consultation on '60s Scoop apology

Chinta Puxley

WINNIPEG — The Canadian Press

Published Monday, Jun. 15, 2015 3:45PM EDT

Last updated Monday, Jun. 15, 2015 3:47PM EDT

Manitoba's Metis federation says its people are being left out of an apology to come this week for aboriginal children who were taken from their homes and placed with non-aboriginal families.

President David Chartrand said no one from the Manitoba government consulted with the Metis or formally invited him to the event set for Thursday at the legislature. The Metis were left out of the residential school settlement and it feels like the same thing is happening again, he said.

Manitoba appears to be blaming Ottawa for what is known as the '60s Scoop when it was provincial social workers who seized aboriginal children and placed them with families as far away as the southern United States, Chartrand said in an interview.

"It's the province that took our children. It's the province that sold our children to the United States and other places. It's the province that did harm to my families.

"Clearly we're not going to let the province get away from this."

Premier Greg Selinger is set to deliver an apology to aboriginal adoptees in what is thought to be the first by a Canadian province. The substance of the apology has not been released, but Selinger said it will acknowledge damage done to those taken from their homes and their culture.

Paul McKie, spokesman for Selinger, said numerous aboriginal organizations have been invited to witness the apology. The Manitoba Metis Federation was invited Friday by phone, by email and formally by letter, he said.

The province, along with affected adoptees, has been working on the apology for months, he said.

"Many people, groups and organizations have been invited," McKie said. "There were informal consultations with many people."

From the 1960s to the 1980s, thousands of aboriginal children were taken from their homes by child-welfare services and placed with non-aboriginal families. Adoptees have been fighting for recognition of their experience and a formal apology similar to that given to survivors of residential schools. Many have filed class-action lawsuits in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

An apology without a plan and proper consultation with those affected is empty, said Chartrand, who has worked with '60s Scoop adoptees and their families for years.

“You can’t just say ‘I’m sorry’ and walk away. You did permanent damage here. You tore entire communities apart. Maybe they’re thinking if they say ‘I’m sorry’ that ends my responsibility.”

Grand Chief David Harper, with Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak which represents northern First Nations, still remembers children being taken away from his community, never to be seen again. He said he will be there to witness the apology but will also be looking for more.

Many adoptees are still trying to find their roots, he said. They need counselling and help with repatriation, he said.

“I’m very glad that the premier is doing the honourable thing,” Harper said. “But words are one thing. Action is another. What kind of action is there for these people?”

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/manitoba-metis-president-upset-by-lack-of-consultation-over-60s-scoop-apology/article24961690/>

Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

Church group raising funds for Native American reservation



Church group raising funds for Native American reservation

Posted: Thursday, June 11, 2015 11:03 pm | *Updated: 4:54 pm, Fri Jun 12, 2015.*

By LESLIE LAKE
Hour Staff Writer

NORWALK -- A group of 15 volunteers from The First Congregational Church on the Green are hoping to bring some joy to the children of a poverty-stricken isolated Sawmill, Arizona Navajo reservation.

"It is one of the most impoverished areas in the United States," said Rev. Frank Newsome, senior minister of First Congregational. "It is one of the poorest areas on the reservation which covers an area the size of West Virginia. The unemployment rate in Sawmill is about 50 percent."

In giving the children there a week-long reprieve from their daily lives, the church volunteers will be providing a summer camp experience for the children.

The June 25 through July 3 camp will consist of crafts, recreation, music, and lots of food according to Newsome.

"It's a fun kind of camp, and the kids get the chance to be kids," Newsome said. "We start the camp with lunch, because we found that the kids come to camp hungry. We're also working on getting donations locally to ship food out to them."

Newsome estimates that the camp will serve between 50 and 100 children.

"We never know how many until we get there," he said. "Navajos live in the moment and don't believe that we're getting there until we get there. We literally go out into the community and promote the camp the day we get there."

The theme of the camp will be a circus.

"We chose a circus theme and will refer to the children as the 'greatest kids on earth,'" Newsome said.

Newsome has been bringing groups to the Navajo reservations for more than 25 years, but this is the first time a group from First Congregational will be going.

"We'll be staying in a dorm owned by Four Corners Native American Ministries about 30 minutes from Sawmill," he said. "It has running water and electricity but it's pretty basic."

Supplies for the camp will be purchased in Arizona and much of them will be left for the benefit of the town.

"We try to leave stuff that will help them," Newsome said. "For the camp there will be things like tents and canopies that we will leave."

The church has been on a fundraising mission to help defray their travel and camp costs.

"We did a fun stock sale at church where people would pay \$25 to buy a 'share' in our pilgrimage," Newsome said. "The camp cost alone will be between \$4,000 and \$5,000 for 100 kids."

One church volunteer, Amanda Otero is heading up a fundraising campaign to offset the costs associated with the camp.

"As you would guess, this trip costs a significant amount of money. We believe the money is well invested into the lives of us and of Navajo families. Each of us are paying \$900 to go," Otero said. "We need help and here's how: We are having a fundraiser at Sparks Sports Grill, 280 Connecticut Ave, Norwalk, on June 18 at 6 p.m. There will be great food, raffles, and karaoke. If anyone mentions they are there to support Navajo, 10 percent of their bill will be donated to our trip."

For information or to make a donation: (203)847-9551.

Direct Link: http://www.thehour.com/news/norwalk/church-group-raising-funds-for-native-american-reservation/article_faa30bc3-a9c9-58f6-b746-1e805f9b2ee3.html

Native American youth to raise issues at first Tribal Youth Gathering

By Paris Burris

6/11/15 5:29 PM EDT

This story is part of the POLITICO Journalism Institute, a journalism training program offered to students by POLITICO. The program allows students to write, edit and produce news stories.

For the first time, the White House is inviting Native-American youth to voice their concerns about issues faced in their community.

For both the government and the community itself, this is an adventure into a new realm.

Native-American issues have rarely gained national attention. In part, it's a result of still persistent discrimination and underrepresentation and a reflection of the stoicism valued in the community.

Unlike black, Latino, and other historically underserved demographic groups, American Indians don't have a history of speaking out in Washington or have prominent advocacy groups to deliver their message. And non-profit groups on reservations often aren't proper resources. So the July 9 conference is a rare opportunity to be heard.

“We Indians know about silence. We aren’t afraid of it,” the late Tsleil-Waututh Nation Chief Dan George once said. “In fact, to us it is more powerful than words.”

Those eager to be among the 800 Native Americans who will be chosen to attend the first Tribal Youth Gathering hope to share their stories about issues like foster care, cultural preservation and education.

To qualify to for the conference, they must complete the Generation Indigenous Challenge by joining the National Native Youth Network, a White House effort in partnership with the Aspen Institute’s Center for Native-American Youth and the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The challenge is an initiative focusing on “improving the lives of Native youth by removing the barriers that stand between Native youth and their opportunity to succeed,” according to the White House.

For Collin Church’s family, foster care is one of the barriers.

The 20-year-old Michigan State University student has lived with a 5-year-old foster brother for almost a year. And in the last couple of months the child’s 12-year-old sister and 14-year-old brother joined the family.

The kids are not allowed to have social media or go to certain places unless approval is given by both the tribe and the state, Church said.

Church is wary of airing his concerns in Washington after one of his siblings had a less-than-ideal experience at an event focused on tribal issues with U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan. Because of privacy concerns for foster kids, Church’s brother wasn’t allowed to talk about the event publicly.

“The way that they’re treated, it’s almost like they need special care,” said Church, a member of the Pokagon Band of the Potawatomi Indians along with his foster siblings. “They should be treated as individuals and have just as many rights as the next person.”

Another challenge the family faces is health care for the 5-year-old, who struggles with mental health issues. And the few resources that are available don’t provide the proper help, Church said.

Jessica McCool, 17, has seen first-hand the effects of a lack of mental health care in Native-American communities.

“I have lost people in my life to suicide, so it’s something I care about,” said McCool, a member of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians.

Among Native-American youth ages 15 to 24, suicide rates are [more than double the national average](#).

“A couple of my friends said they had lost three people (to suicide) in the last year at their school, and it’s just really hard to hear things like that,” McCool said.

The problem is a lack of clinics and hospitals. But the first step to addressing the problem, McCool said, is raising awareness.

“I’m just really hoping for the White House to let youth know that it’s OK to talk and that they should be talking,” she said.

For Vanessa Goodthunder, keeping her culture alive is the biggest challenge.

The 21-year-old history junior at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities committed her life three years ago to preserving her Native language.

She teaches basics of the Dakota language to children and adults at the non-profit Dakota Wicoha, the “Dakota way of life.”

“If you don’t have the language, then you don’t have a piece of yourself,” Goodthunder said.

Even though Minnesota requires American-Indian History classes for its schools, key issues are left out of the curriculum, Goodthunder said.

“A lot of people don’t know that ‘Minnesota’ is a Dakota word,” she said, adding that the river got its name from the words “minni,” meaning “water,” and “sotah,” meaning “sky-tinted” or “cloudy.”

But non-profits and other sources are not enough to keep the language from becoming extinct. Not only are there not enough of these sources, but they are expensive to run, Goodthunder said.

Solving these problems will take collaboration between Native-Americans and the government, Goodthunder said. “Natives have so much to give, they have so many ideas and they know what has worked and what hasn’t worked,” she said.

McCool agrees.

“We can’t choose the poverty we grow up in or the lives that we’re given,” she said, “but we can choose to persevere and choose joy and happiness.”

So far, the students don’t have a concrete set of expectations – they’re just glad for the opportunity to be heard.

“Even going to D.C. and being able to be in the presence of all of those resources and people is something I would’ve ever fathomed,” Goodthunder said. “When they opened

the door up, it opened my eyes to see exactly what D.C. can do and what I can do in D.C.”

Read more: <http://www.politico.com/story/2015/06/white-house-118898.html#ixzz3dEsrMmQN>

This Native American Rapper Is Using Hip-Hop to Tear Down Indigenous Stereotypes

By [Tom Barnes](#) June 12, 2015

Sicangu Lakota rapper Frank Waln is a true revolutionary. For years, the 25-year-old MC has been using his unique and urgent blend of hip-hop, which draws inspiration from the tribal music of his home on South Dakota's Rosebud Reservation, to direct attention to the most pressing issues facing indigenous communities today.

With his mic, he's battled degrading [stereotypes](#), fought for [indigenous visibility](#) and campaigned against the [environmental challenges](#) his people face. He recently gave MTV a window into his activism, appearing on the [second season](#) of *Rebel Music*. On his upcoming full-length debut he's looking to take fans even deeper. The project is shaping up to be his most personal yet.

Waln has been selected as one of the inaugural recipients of the [Mic 50 award](#), celebrating millennial leaders having a huge impact. (Check out the full list at [Mic50.com](#) to explore the other honorees.) *Mic* caught up with him shortly after he was announced as an honoree to discuss his inspirations for his music, his efforts to avoid having his music become "poverty porn" and the numerous challenges facing indigenous communities today.

***Mic:* I hear you're working on a new album. Tell us what people can expect.**

Frank Waln: It's been a really intense time. I've been traveling a lot for shows, doing workshops. This is my first legit solo album, it's going to be special for me. I kinda have a title. It's in my language, Lakota, and I need to run it by a few more elders before I share it. I'm asking permission and making sure I'm using the phrase and the words in the right way.

It's gonna be my story of coming to terms with being a Lakota person, born on a reservation in South Dakota. Born with all this historical trauma and baggage, unfortunately descending from ancestors who survived genocide, and our whole history of colonization. That's still happening. When I was younger, I didn't realize that. You're just born into it. Then I got older and found music and found my voice and found my strength and realized my greatness, realized that I descended from greatness. And I

stepped back and was able to look at the whole picture of my reality, how it was shaped by this colonization, and then how I healed from that.

Some of these songs are pretty painful, but you know, that's part of the healing process. Hopefully, people who are going through something similar can use it as a framework for those who are living similar circumstances.

Mic: Going to get approval from your elders to use that phrase for your album title — is that something you've done before? Have you ever run a song by your elders or anything for approval?

FW: I've never called a entire project a Lakota name or Lakota phrase. But I've done similar things. When I come up with phrases in songs, I want to double-check because I'm not fluent in my language. I grew up not speaking it. Everything has been a result of the boarding schools and the fact that the government tried to get rid of our language and kill off our culture. So my generation is living with the aftermath of that. But the beautiful thing is there are efforts now on my reservation and in different tribes across the nation to try to revive the language.

Mic: One of the things that caught my eye about your story was how you started off trying to be a doctor and then you switched to music. What drew you to being a doctor? When you switched to music were those impulses carried over? Did they change?

FW: My end goals were the same, my priorities were the same, but I wasn't doing it right at first. Basically, when I chose to be a doctor, I graduated from high school, valedictorian of my class, I got a bunch of scholarships ... I had this amazing opportunity. And I always knew that I wanted to help people and I wanted to heal people. My whole life, I've seen people that I look up to, people that I love, people that raised me, helping people. So I have that within me. When I got this scholarship, I thought the only way I could do that was to be a doctor.

It took me a couple years to figure out what was in my heart. I was making music since I was a kid. I didn't realize the greatness of my gift, the greatness of my style. I hid it. I didn't believe in it. And it was after I hit a little rock bottom point in my life. I was depressed, I was going through a lot of things, and I decided to just do what I love.

Mic: Talking about the *Rebel Music* doc with MTV, we actually [spoke to Inez Jasper](#). Towards the end of the episode you said that "people are paying attention to the indigenous cause more than ever." What do you think is driving that?

FW: Social media and the Internet have been pretty huge for us, because now we're able to get our voices out. Before, we didn't have a platform to get our voices out there, get our art out there and just speak to the world. A lot of what mainstream media portrayed of indigenous people is very stereotypical, one-dimensional; it blanketed all indigenous tribes as one tribe. It's a very false representation of who we are as a people.

Now that we have social media and the Internet, we can create our own media. Not only for getting our stuff out there, but also for communicating between each other inter-tribally. When [colonizers] put us on reservations, they cut off all these lines of communication that we had between tribes — we traveled, we shared stories and we were strong because of that, we were organized. Now social media is an amazing tool to re-establish that as indigenous people across the world and join our voices. Because together, our voices are strong.

Mic: What are some of the biggest misunderstandings or misconceptions that people have?

FW: Oh man, I could be here all day, dude. [laughs] Unfortunately, I met a lot of people who were just really ignorant, thinking that we're gone, or we're a people of the past, that we're a static culture, our culture doesn't grow or evolve. That's when I started paying attention to who's telling our story. Why do people believe this about me and the community I come from? I saw that it was non-native people telling our story, giving a misrepresentation of who we are. And I was like, "I want to tell my story. I'm going to tell people about where I come from and use my music for that."

People also think we get all these free handouts and we have all these entitlements, which is actually really false. This entire country belonged to indigenous people, all the land, we lived here before the United States existed. And they took it all from us and tried to kill us and that resulted in us living in some of the worst conditions in the country.

Mic: I've seen you tweet about "[poverty porn](#)" — that you don't want that to be the focus of your music. I think that's something that hip-hop as a whole struggles with sometimes. How does one walk the line between accuracy and poverty porn?

For myself, I do come from one of the poorest counties in the country. I do come from a place that struggles with poverty, and that is part of my story. But that isn't the only story, you know? When outside media sources come in, those are the only stories that they extract. So for a lot of the world, that becomes the story that defines us as indigenous people.

For me, I just try to provide a balance. Tell the beautiful stories, tell the hopeful stories as well, because there's so much beauty in our communities and there's so much hope. There's people doing great work to bring about change in my home community. For the most part, the world isn't going to hear those stories. As my platform grows, I hope to try to amplify those voices and those stories.



Mic: Ultimately, what is the impact you hope your art has?

FW: I've been asked this question a lot, and this past year I've added some new stuff. But bottom line is, people ask me why I talk about the things I do, why I make music about these things — I say I just want myself, my family, everyone I love, my tribe, all indigenous people to be happy, healthy and respected. Hopefully my album and my work will provide a blueprint or a framework for people to heal. And the world can realize that we're human beings. With everything I do, I'm working towards that.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Direct Link: <http://mic.com/articles/120550/this-native-american-rapper-is-using-hip-hop-to-tear-down-indigenous-stereotypes>

The 'Part Cherokee' Factor: Pew Survey Misrepresents Indian Country, Critics Say

[Simon Moya-Smith](#)

6/12/15

On Friday, news broke that the president of the NAACP chapter in Spokane, Washington is under investigation for misrepresenting her black identity after her parents said she is not African American.

Rachel Dolezal, 37, who has claimed to be African American on [at least one application](#), has been lying about her race, her parents said.

“She is Caucasian by birth,” Dolezal’s mother, Ruthanne Dolezal, told [NBC News affiliate KHQ](#) in Spokane.

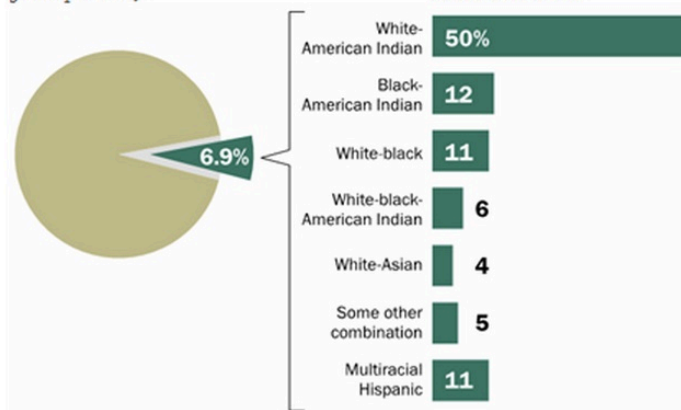
Dolezal also claims to be part Native American, which her parents do not dispute, though they do deny their daughter's [claim that she was born in a teepee](#).

The Dolezal scandal comes on the heels of [a new report](#) by the Pew Research Center released Thursday on the growing number of multiracial adults in the U.S.

According to the report, 6.9 percent of the adult population “could be considered multiracial,” and that biracial adults who claim to be white and Native American “comprise half of the country’s multiracial population – by far the country’s largest multiracial group.”

White and American Indian Biracial Adults Are the Largest Multiracial Group

Percentage of all U.S. adults who have at least two races in their background (based on races of self, parents or grandparents)



pewresearch.org

The report also states that the biracial white and Native American population is more likely than other multiracial groups to be politically conservative.

Following the release of the report, Native Americans began excoriating the survey for not taking into consideration the “part Cherokee factor,” Tara Houska, a tribal attorney in Washington, D.C., told *ICTMN*.

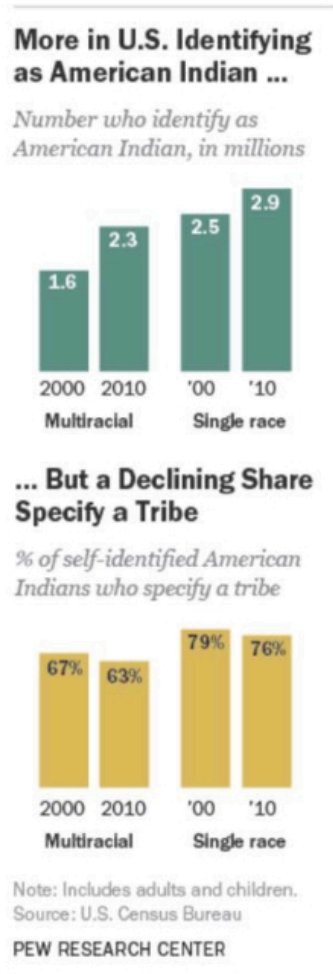
Houska, who is Ojibwe, said if the report was taken at face value, “half of America has a Cherokee grandmother.”

“[The] Pew Research presents their study as if it is fact, and makes little to no mention of participants self-identifying their race,” she said.

Dr. Juliana Menasce Horowitz, associate director of research at the Pew Research Center, told *ICTMN* that in their surveys about race, conclusions are based solely on self-

identification. Horowitz added that, for this survey, they did not ask for one's tribal affiliation.

"We have to take people at their word for how they identify themselves," Horowitz said. "In surveys, you have to trust what people are saying is true."



pewresearch.org

The study also found that whites and blacks who claim to be Native American have little to no ties to their alleged Native American heritage. Sixty-one percent of people who claim to be white and Native American reported that [they have more in common with whites](#) than with Native Americans.

Responding to criticism of the survey, Horowitz emphasized that this was a research project and not an official government survey. She said there was no incentive for the 21,224 adult participants to lie about their identity.

But for Houska, there is no incentive needed for people to misrepresent themselves as being Native American.

“Identifying as Native American has become trendy, just as appropriating pieces of our cultures is now fashionable,” she said.

Dr. Adrienne Keene, who is Cherokee and [blogs](#) about Native American cultural appropriation, told *ICTMN* that the survey is a demonstration of the growing percentage of people who claim to be Native American.

“We’re used to being misrepresented,” she said. “For us, it’s not a surprise that the data is so skewed.”

Keene said there is a “danger” when conducting surveys. She said there are no guarantees that participants are going to be honest, and that it is widely known such surveys produce large margins of error.

“There’s no easy answer to it,” she said. “[But] there clearly has to be a better way.”

Horowitz said she does not see the Pew Research Center implementing ways to prove in their surveys that an individual is Native American by blood.

According to the survey, American Indians who report their tribal affiliation on the U.S. Census data collection has been steadily falling since 2010. People who claim to be multiracial Native American are less likely to state which tribe or nation they allegedly have blood ties to.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/06/12/part-chokeke-factor-pew-survey-misrepresents-indian-country-critics-say-160712>

An American Indian should replace Jackson on the \$20 bill

by: [Albert Bender](#)

June 12 2015



NASHVILLE, Tenn.- On Saturday, June 6, 2015 local Native Americans held another in a series of demonstrations at the Hermitage on the issue of the legacy of the notorious "Indian Killer" Andrew Jackson. This demonstration differed from those held prior in that the call was for an American Indian, and only an American Indian, to replace Jackson on the \$20 bill.

Recently, an organization, Women On \$20, has come forth with the proposal that a woman should replace Jackson on the denomination. This organization collected signatures online in which the voters' choice was the historical African American heroine, Harriet Tubman.

From the vantage point of Native Americans in Nashville, we have been besieging the doors of the Hermitage literally for months now, and historically for decades. Other local Native organizations, most notably, the Middle Tennessee Indian Lodge, going as far back as the 1970's, were demonstrating at the Hermitage against the glorified memory of Jackson, this early day American Hitler.

American Indians have born the brunt of opposing Jackson both when he was alive and again today.

Why should only an American Indian replace Jackson on the \$20 bill? It would only be the most fitting justice that Jackson should be replaced with a representative of the people he so viciously tried to exterminate.

I would, of course, opt for Wilma Mankiller, the first female chief of the Cherokee Nation in the 20th century. Considering that Jackson was responsible for the deaths of 4,000-8,000 Cherokees and thousands of other Native Americans there should only be Mankiller or another American Indian considered.

Jackson did not kill thousands of women or those of other races. He killed thousands of Indians- men, women, children and elderly. He enslaved Native children at the Hermitage taken as war captives. He massacred thousands beginning with the Creek War in 1813. In fact that War, according to prominent historian, William G. McLoughlin, was "a massacre from beginning to end."

There is a story current to this day among present-day Muscogee Creeks that the origin of Jackson on the \$20 bill stems from Creek children taken in that conflict being sold as "pets" for \$20. Hence, the beginning of Jackson's association with \$20.

While we have great respect for the efforts of Women On \$20 and the memory of Harriet Tubman, Jackson's victims of choice were American Indians. His legacy lives on in the marginalization of Native Americans in every economic, social and political venue imaginable in this country. Recognition of Native Americans is more than long overdue.

This writer recently posted a letter to the editor that ran in the local paper and all the email responses were overwhelmingly in favor of an American Indian on the bill. Further, since the last demonstration I have been stopped on the street by everyday citizens who expressed support for a Native American to replace Jackson on the money.

We, Native Americans of Nashville, locked in struggle against the exalted memory of this racist beast, call upon all other American Indians nationwide to support our call for a Native American to replace Jackson on the \$20 bill. Further, we call upon Women On \$20 and all others involved in this movement to support our advocacy for an American Indian on the bill.

Direct Link: <http://peoplesworld.org/an-american-indian-should-replace-jackson-on-the-20-bill/>

Native American Tribes Start Yearly Harvest of Eel-Like Fish

OREGON CITY, Ore. — Jun 12, 2015, 7:20 PM ET
By GOSIA WOZNIAKA Associated Press

They dove into the cold waters, emerging with writhing, eel-like fish in hand and thrusting them into nets.

Thus began Northwest Native American tribes' annual lamprey harvest at a rushing, 40-foot waterfall about 15 miles south of Portland.

The jawless, gray fish are a traditional food source for tribal members in the Columbia River Basin, which stretches from the [Oregon](#) coast to Canada and into [Idaho](#), [Montana](#) and Washington. Lampreys grow to about 2 feet long and are prized for their rich, fatty meat.

On Friday, adults, teens and children from the Umatilla and Warm Springs reservations in Oregon and the Yakama reservation in Washington crawled over slippery rocks and waded through icy pools to reach the lampreys' hiding spots. The fish latch onto rocks in Willamette Falls with their round, toothy mouths.

"Our people have always come here, generation after generation," said Bobby Begay, a Warm Springs tribal member who drove more than a 100 miles to the falls from his village of Celilo.

Begay, 46, has attended the harvest for more than 40 years. He is teaching his children and nephews how to navigate the rocks and where to find the biggest catch.

"The same fishing holes my grandfather showed me, his father and grandfather showed him, and I showed my kids," he said.

Lampreys taste best when roasted over an open fire, Begay said. They also can be dried or frozen for later use. The fish harvested this month will be distributed to tribal elders and used for ceremonial purposes, he said.

In previous generations, lampreys were abundant up and down the Columbia River and its tributaries. Biologists have estimated at least a million once were crossing Bonneville Dam on the Columbia east of Portland.

But their numbers have dwindled over the past 30 years because of the dams and toxins such as pesticides. About 20,000 remain, said Brian McIlraith with the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

Willamette Falls is the last place where the fish can be caught by the hundreds.

Tribes have been instrumental in advocating for lamprey restoration, and the government has started paying attention. That's because lampreys also offer an alternate food source for sea lions and other predators that otherwise would be munching on threatened salmon.

Tribes have received funding and run research and recovery projects. They truck lampreys past dams and have pushed for construction of ramps to help the fish navigate the structures.

They're also looking at breeding lampreys in a hatchery, but that's not the preferred method, said tribal elder Donnie Winishut Sr., who observed the harvest to assure safety.

"We would rather see them grow in a natural way," Winishut said. "It's good to see the young people coming to the falls and learning our tradition, and I hope they can continue coming here to catch the fish."

Direct Link: <http://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/native-american-tribes-start-yearly-harvest-eel-fish-31733591>

Native American child placement, inmates' spiritual practices in Iowa topic of Sioux City meeting

June 12, 2015 10:00 pm • [KIRBY KAUFMAN kkaufman@siouxcityjournal.com](mailto:kkaufman@siouxcityjournal.com)

SIOUX CITY | State officials met Friday in Sioux City to discuss Native American concerns about spiritual rights in Iowa's prison system and child placement through the Department of Human Services.

The conversation focused on incarcerated Natives Americans who were denied adequate religious time to participate in a sweat lodge ceremony and child custody proceedings involving Native children.

About 20 people attended the meeting at Four Directions Community Center, 613 Water St. Sioux City police officers and DHS representatives also attended.

Karen Mackey, who serves on the Iowa Commission on Native American Affairs, said a two-hour time frame is allowed for people to attend religious activities, but that is not sufficient for a sweat.

Mackey and other commissioners met with officials at the Prairie Hills Work Release Center in rural Sioux City. Officials are working with a volunteer who the commission members say has agreed to provide transportation for work-release inmates who want to participate in a sweat.

Steve Scholl, director of corrections for Iowa's Third Judicial District, said the length of time was a security concern for the state's prisons, but officials are working toward a long-term solution.

Frank LaMere, executive director of Four Directions and a Native activist who lives in South Sioux City, said it is important for officials to improve local and state efforts to accommodate Native culture.

"We don't have that opportunity to connect in Des Moines or other parts of the state," LaMere said.

In addition to prison concerns, the commission talked about how [changes in February to the Indian Child Welfare Act](#) would affect Woodbury County. The legislation, first drafted in 1978, outlines the roles of child welfare agencies, state courts and other agencies in placement of Native children.

ICWA was created so a Native child would be identified and treated as an "Indian child" throughout the legal process. It allows tribes to intervene with the judicial system to prevent family breakups and calls for child placement preference to be with people of their own tribe. The new guidelines are aimed at full compliance with the law.

LaMere said he plans to discuss the changes with County Attorney P.J. Jennings.

Direct Link: http://siouxcityjournal.com/news/native-american-child-placement-inmates-spiritual-practices-in-iowa-topic/article_e5ed6100-b041-5e14-a2f2-83fdeba02bac.html

Native American tribes tackle diet and health woes with businesses built on traditional foods

Across the US, Native Americans are reclaiming their cultural cuisines to produce healthy and sustainable nutrition options within their communities



Residents of the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota have to travel for miles to buy convenience foods. Entrepreneurial tribes are reclaiming traditional methods to combat nutrition challenges. Photograph: Newsport

Saturday 13 June 2015 14.02 BST Last modified on Saturday 13 June 2015 15.47 BST

For many residents of the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, getting to a supermarket requires a two-hour drive to Rapid City. It's an expensive trip for people living in the third poorest county in the US. Many residents have no access to transportation, leaving only one option: on-reservation convenience stores that stock processed, long-shelf-life foods.

To combat these poor nutrition options, many tribes are reclaiming traditional foods as a way to correct severe health and economic disparities. All across the country, Native American entrepreneurs are combining traditional values with common-sense business strategies to tackle hunger, unemployment and unsustainable food production practices.

Pine Ridge didn't become a food desert by itself. Along with other tribes throughout the country, the Oglala Sioux endured generations of war, forced removal and assimilation policies that dismantled traditional economies and food systems.

The reservation system prompted dramatic changes in the diet of Native peoples in the US. Restricted or prevented altogether from traditional hunting and agriculture practices, many tribes were forced instead to accept government food relief programs that distributed basic staples heavy on salt, sugar and fat. The rapid change in diet, aided more

recently by fast food and more sedentary lifestyles, have contributed to an epidemic of diabetes, obesity and other [health problems in Indian Country](#).

Like others who have turned to local, sustainably produced foods to effect social change, Native Americans are embracing the so-called food sovereignty movement, a term coined in the 1990s by the international peasant group [La Via Campesina](#), to restore culture and economic autonomy.

“There’s a cultural revolution going on in Indian Country, reconnecting people to the rituals of where food came from, why food is sacred,” said Mark Tilsen, co-founder of the Pine Ridge-based food producer [Native American Natural Foods](#).

Tilsen and his business partner, Karlene Hunter, are at the forefront of this revolution. Launched in 2007, their business is now one of the most successful Native-owned food companies in the country. Its primary product, Tanka Bar, is a line of energy bars made from prairie-fed, antibiotic-free buffalo meat and based on a traditional Oglala recipe. The natural and organic market research firm [Spins](#) ranks it as the third best-selling jerky in US natural supermarkets.

According to Tilsen, *tanka* means large or great, and conveys the idea of tremendous or generous acts for the benefit of others. The name is a vehicle for telling not only the story of the company, but of their people’s struggle for survival and self-determination after the government oversaw a mass extermination of the buffalo in the late 19th century. As their main food source was driven to near extinction, Plains peoples were forced onto reservations.

Tilsen and Hunter didn’t set out to build a better energy bar. They wanted to support Native buffalo producers who were working to restore the sacred animal to the prairie. And they wanted to boost the economy and health of Pine Ridge.

“This energetic movement is really taking stock of how food impacts the health of Native peoples, but also the economy and social existence of Native communities,” said Raymond Foxworth, vice president of grant making and development for the [First Nations Development Institute](#) (FNDI), which supports tribal economic development programs.

There’s a cultural revolution going on in Indian Country, reconnecting people to the rituals of where food came from.

Mark Tilsen, Native American Natural Foods

Particularly in the last five years, Foxworth said, the food movement in Indian Country has expanded to include more intertribal collaboration and the development of new business models and best practices. Demand has grown so much that between 2011 and 2014, the institute was able to fund just 7% of the proposals they received.

The [Oneida Nation](#) of Wisconsin, which runs its own organic farm and retail food business, has emerged as a leader in promoting collaboration and knowledge-sharing between tribes, said Foxworth. The Oneida Nation provide mentoring and trainings on topics like environmental stewardship and livestock management, and co-hosts an annual Native [food sovereignty summit](#) with FNDI.

While the first priority of tribes is often to educate the community about traditional food production and ensure access to fresh, healthy foods, many tribes go on to develop businesses.

In tiny [Nambé Pueblo](#) near Santa Fe, New Mexico, for example, a community farm supplies corn, beans, chiles and buffalo meat to its senior center and to individual families. Meanwhile, [Santa Ana Pueblo](#) has started a successful business selling products made of blue corn and other traditional Pueblo foods.

Interest extends far beyond tribal enterprises. Freddie Bitsoie, a Navajo chef, recently produced a television pilot for a [cooking show](#), Reservations Not Required, touring the US and Canada to highlight the distinct culinary traditions of different cultures.

“A lot of people believe that Native people are all the same,” Bitsoie said. “So I can be a conduit for letting people know about different tribes and keeping that food story going.”

Lois Ellen Frank is another successful culinary entrepreneur. She’s a Native American food historian and owner of [Red Mesa Cuisine](#), a Santa Fe catering company specializing in indigenous dishes from throughout the Americas. Her meals feature local, seasonal foods, purchased whenever possible from Native producers.

Frank, who is Kiowa, thinks benefit corporations could be the way forward for indigenous businesses that have social and environmental sustainability goals. “I think that’s moving in the direction of a more Native way of being,” she said.

But reservation-based entrepreneurs face many challenges. Financing is hard to come by, a circumstance compounded by the difficulty of attracting private investment on tribal lands held in trust by the federal government.

Courses in business administration and entrepreneurship are scarce on and around reservations, although organizations like FNDI, Intertribal Agriculture Council and the Native CDFI Network are working with universities, tribal colleges and tribal governments to extend more technical and business training opportunities.

Indian Country faces unique logistical and bureaucratic complexities. Remote locations, bad roads and unreliable power and telecommunications make it difficult for some tribes to easily access supply chains and get goods to market. And the complicated constellation of federal, state and tribal laws regulating production and sale of agricultural goods can be particularly cumbersome for small producers, which have greater challenges in navigating the bureaucracy.

Janie Simms Hipp studies and acts on these challenges as director of the [Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative](#) at the University of Arkansas School of Law. The think tank was established to help tribes develop policies and models to strengthen sustainable food systems.

Hipp, who was previously senior adviser for tribal relations to US Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, says she sees potential everywhere she looks – Native agriculture is now a \$3bn market, and the number of Native American-operated farms jumped 135% between 2002 and 2012, according to the most recent USDA agricultural census. But there are enormous unmet funding needs, and gathering data to fully assess those needs is costly.

Despite the barriers, Hipp remains hopeful, especially when she considers the growing interest among young people. Next month, the initiative will host 75 students at its second annual youth leadership summit, including high school students already managing agriculture-related businesses.

“We’re at a turning point on these issues in Indian Country,” she said. “My goal is to have enough resources out there for intensive business training, and farm and food entrepreneurship and financial education training – at every level.”

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2015/jun/13/native-american-tribes-diet-health-traditional-foods-business-entrepreneur>

Stand Up for Native Children Act Introduced in the House

Posted: Fri 7:01 PM, Jun 12, 2015

By: [Max Grossfeld](#)



In Washington, Democrats and Republicans came together to introduce a House bill to create a commission to help Native American children.

Stand Up for Native American Children would work to better identify ways to use already available funds, develop better [data](#) collection methods and increase coordination between groups that help native children.

Sen.r Heidi Heitkamp, D-N.D., wrote the bill and introduced it to the Senate, where it passed unanimously less than two weeks ago.

"It's always gratifying when maybe the most marginalized and weakest voices in our country, and those are the voices of native kids, get a level of discuss and discourse and attention that we're getting on this bill," said Heitkamp.

If it passes the House, it will go to the president for final approval.

Direct Link: <http://www.kfyrtv.com/home/headlines/Stand-Up-for-Native-Children-Act-Introduced-in-the-House-307208761.html>

Minnesota education bill gives American Indian schools boost

By [St. Paul Pioneer Press](#) on Jun 13, 2015 at 8:45 p.m.
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ST. PAUL -- Tucked inside the \$17 billion education funding bill that emerged from Minnesota's special session negotiations is a 'historic' investment in some of the state's most underserved students.

The compromise bill includes \$18 million in new funding for Native American students and tribal schools overseen by the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Education. The dollars will go toward school-level programs to improve Native American student achievement and will increase per pupil funding at tribal schools bringing them on par with what other state schools receive.

"This was a hard-fought win for us and the kids in those schools," said Brenda Cassellius, state education commissioner, during a June 3 legislative hearing detailing the bill. Most of the new funding was left out of the initial education budget that Gov. Mark Dayton vetoed while saying it didn't invest enough new money in his education priorities.

The funding boost has advocates for Native American students cautiously hopeful.

Nicole Martin Rogers, a descendant of the White Earth Nation who serves on a St. Paul schools advisory board, said the new investment sounded like a positive step forward, but how the new dollars are used will be the deciding factor.

“I need to see what is done with the money,” Martin Rogers said. “Just throwing money at a problem is not a solution.”

Minnesota has roughly 20,000 American Indian students with one-third attending schools in the Twin Cities metro and the rest going to out-state district and charter schools. About 800 students attend four tribal schools overseen by the Bureau of Indian Education.

Native American students have one of the largest achievement gaps in Minnesota. In 2014, just half of American Indian students graduated on time.

School districts have long struggled to fund academic programs designed to help Native American students. Tribal school facilities are considered modest at best and dilapidated at worst.

Minnesota is not alone when it comes to struggling to educate American Indian students. Both Dakotas, Iowa and Wisconsin also have disparities between Native American academic achievement and their peers.

Dennis Olson, state director of American Indian Education, says the new money in the education budget will put Minnesota near the top of states when it comes to spending to help Native American students. Funding had been relatively flat for decades.

“We are putting our money where our mouth is, essentially,” said Olson, who added that Minnesota has long had policies to help American Indian students, but “the money rarely followed.”

Funding gap

In 2015, Minnesota is on track to spend roughly \$8 million on programs and services designed to directly improve American Indian student achievement. The next two-year budget will more than double that investment.

In the past, district schools and charters have competed for a limited number of Success for the Future grants to craft academic supports and other programs for Native American students. Funding was small, and only about 32 of the 138 district schools and charters that were eligible received money.

The grant program will be transformed into a dedicated funding stream. Schools with at least 20 Native American students will receive a base of \$20,000 in funding and \$358 for each additional student.

Olson says that transition will be a “game-changer” for many schools, and he estimates the new programs districts create will reach up to 95 percent of the state’s Native American students.

A \$5 million increase in aid to tribal schools will boost their per pupil funding cap from \$1,500 to \$3,230. That money will offset federal dollars the schools should be receiving, but the new state funding is only budgeted for the next two years.

Cassellius said using state funds to fill in that federal gap sends an important message to students across the state.

“It’s a very proud moment for me personally, and for every other Minnesotan, to say every child matters. When we say all, we mean all,” Cassellius said.

Minnesota lawmakers in St. Paul and in Washington D.C. have long pushed for the Bureau of Indian Education to better fund schools here and across the nation. In a March letter, U.S. Rep. John Kline, R-Burnsville, asked Congress to increase funding for Bureau of Indian Education Schools by \$59 million.

Kline cited “health and safety hazards” at tribal schools nationwide, including the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. Kline visited the “Bug” school in April with U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan, D-Crosby, to bring attention to what Kline called “deplorable” conditions at many tribal schools.

“The federal government has made a commitment to American Indian students and families to provide educational opportunities in a manner that preserves their culture, language and traditions,” Kline wrote. “Unfortunately, we are failing to meet that commitment.”

Academic gap

Minnesota lawmakers and educators are investing new money to help Native American students because they’ve long struggled to keep pace academically with their peers.

The percentage of American Indian students scoring proficient in math, reading and science trails state averages by more than 20 percentage points, test data shows. American Indian students are almost half as likely as white students to score proficient on state accountability assessments.

Last year, 81 percent of all Minnesota seniors graduated high school on time. But 50 percent of Native American students earned diplomas in four years, state data shows.

Olson says new state funding will be used to develop academic supports, staff training and initiatives to better connect students and their families to school.

Much of that new work will build on the successes of small programs throughout the state. Data shows targeted programs in have helped improve graduation rates by 8 percentage points over the past three years.

Much of that gain came in schools receiving Success for the Future state grants. Olson hopes providing similar funding to more districts will amplify those efforts.

“Now they will be able to serve students from early childhood to 12th grade and beyond,” Olson said.

Work ahead

For new initiatives to be successful, Martin Rogers says school leaders will have to carefully consider the cultural and historical backgrounds of their Native American students. She believes much of what’s driving their achievement gap is a disconnect from both school curriculum and culture.

She added that students will perform better academically when they feel the school system is accepting of their beliefs and backgrounds. School leaders must also reach out to students’ families in ways that are culturally relevant.

Finally, Martin Rogers hopes district leaders can work with tribal leaders to develop successful programing.

“They are going to have to find a good balance between their recommendations and the sovereignty of tribes,” Martin Rogers said. “On the flip side, there should be some attention giving tribes technical guidance and support.”

Olson acknowledged that developing new supports for American Indian students will take time and careful planning. As the new money begins to flow to districts, Olson says his department and others will be there to help.

Olson has high hopes for the work ahead.

“Minnesota (will be) one of the leading states in providing resources for American Indian students and their academic needs,” he said. “We will be looked at as the gold standard when it comes to how American Indian students are educated.”

BY THE NUMBERS

20,000: Number of American Indian students in Minnesota, with one-third attending schools in the Twin Cities metro.

\$18 million: Additional spending in the reworked education spending bill geared to improving American Indian schools.

50: Percentage of American Indian students who graduated in four years in 2014.

Direct Link: <http://www.grandforksherald.com/news/politics/3765997-minnesota-education-bill-gives-american-indian-schools-boost>

Why 2016 Is the Ideal Election For a Native Candidate

[Mark Trahan](#)

6/10/15

The first ballots for the 2016 presidential election will be cast in a little more than seven months. That means between now and January there will be a rush of candidates, a winnowing of those who fail to raise money or attention, and, if we are lucky, a philosophical and practical debate about the challenges facing the United States.

In an ideal world that discussion would include American Indian and Alaska Native concerns. But that never happens (unless you read between the lines).

[So the Democrats](#) — Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley, and the newest entrant, Rhode Island Gov. Lincoln Chafee (who once was a “liberal” Republican) — campaign on issues ranging from protecting and expanding voting rights to switching the U.S. to the metric system.

[And the Republicans](#)? Well, just listing the candidates is kind of like making sure you get all the names right when reporting about a school play. There are so many, you're bound to miss someone. But here goes (in order of recent polling by Real Clear Politics): Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, Dr. Ben Carson, Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, Donald Trump, former Texas Gov. Rick Perry, Ohio Gov. John Kasich, former Penn. Sen. Rick Santorum, Carly Fiorina, South Carolina Sen. Lindsay Graham, and Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal. And that's only the 15 “major” candidates. So in order to make noise in that large a field some of those would-be presidents rode Harley's across Iowa this weekend, revving up their engines and their rhetoric. Hardly the right atmosphere for a discussion about tribal sovereignty.



Mark Trahan

The early primary campaign season is not ideal for a serious discussion about Indian country's issues. The election calendar starts with Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina in late January.

Nevada will be the fourth state to vote — and the first state with a significant tribal population. There are more than 30 reservation communities, urban residents, and a total Native American population of about 1.6 percent. More important, [Nevada remains a caucus state](#). So if a large number of Native Americans show up in the right locations, well, all bets are off. (Only 33,000 Republicans voted in the last Nevada caucus out of some 400,000 G.O.P. voters.)

And what if there was a Native candidate as a draw? This ought to be the year to make that so.

A Native American candidate could take advantage of a nasty, undemocratic (but legal) structure. The law allows secret donors to spend unlimited sums of money to benefit a single candidate. So what if a few of the wealthy tribes, and, yes, I do mean casino tribes, raised a lot of money for such a [super PAC](#)? (Even though the money cannot go directly to a candidate, it still has been used to boost candidates. In 2012, for example, former House [Speaker Newt Gingrich was on the receiving end](#) of more than \$5 million from casino owner Sheldon Adelson and his wife.)

Coming up with a super PAC candidate from Indian country is a tough sell for Democrats. Even though there are many folks who could (and should) be candidates, there are too few with a large enough political footprint. And taking that much money from a single source runs against what many grassroots type candidates believe anyway.

But on the Republican side, there is someone who has that credibility right now, [Rep. Tom Cole of Oklahoma](#), a member of the Chickasaw Tribe.

[Cole is as conservative](#) as his Oklahoma voters yet he is often the voice of reason in the House of Representatives. [He's said that new revenue](#) — meaning taxes — might be needed to get past the sequester and that repealing the Affordable Care Act might not be possible as long as a Democrat is in the White House. This alone distinguishes him from the other 15 Republican candidates running for president.

He's championed tribal sovereignty and was a key player in the House vote for the Violence Against Women Act. Let me be clear here: Cole fits the orthodoxy of the Republican Party. He supports pipeline construction and increasing oil and gas production. Cole also wants less federal spending and votes for budgets that would have negative impact on tribal communities. But for a Republican primary, and for a Republican candidate, Indian country would still come out ahead, if he were running and raised the issues in Indian country that call out for a larger debate.

The down side of a Cole candidacy is that he would have to give up his seat in the House — and his seniority and influence. That's probably too high a cost for an improbable presidential quest. But this might be the year to try something outrageous.

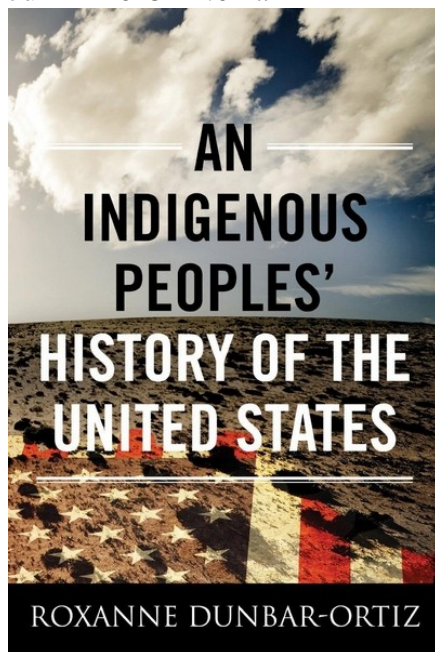
Mark Trahant is an independent journalist and a member of The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. For up-to-the-minute posts, download the free [Trahant Reports app for your smart phone or tablet](#).

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/06/10/why-2016-ideal-election-native-candidate-160654>

Review: History obscured — Colonialism's great toll on the indigenous people of North America

BY SKIP JOHNSON Special to The Post and Courier

Jun 14 2015 12:01 am



AN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES. By Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz. Beacon Press. 296 pages. \$27.95.

Most histories of the United States tell how Europeans discovered a wild world and established a new form of government under which all people would be free — a true democracy.

Not so, say the indigenous North Americans. They say that version of history is a national myth, a bald-faced lie.

In her important new book on the history of indigenous people in North America, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz writes: “The history of the United States is a history of settler colonialism — the founding of a state based on the ideology of white supremacy, the widespread practice of African slavery, and a policy of genocide and land theft. ... The affirmation of Democracy requires the denial of colonialism.”

To be sure, Dunbar-Ortiz, who is part Indian, is prejudiced. She writes with unrestrained glee when she describes how the indigenous people’s newfound soul has led them to demand the return of great swaths of land that the U.S. government stole from them. Her prejudice becomes even clearer when she capitalizes the words “Indian,” “Indigenous,” “Brave” and “Black” in all their usages, but “white” always appears with a lowercase “w.”

Dunbar-Ortiz’s writing is powder-dry, not unlike a history textbook, which it virtually is. Like a textbook, her book includes 60 pages of footnotes, attributions and recommended readings, which helps establish its authenticity.

Despite the dry writing, this is riveting reading, and often very uncomfortable reading for those of us who grew up with names like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson burned into our minds as heroes. It’s uncomfortable because you know deep down it’s true.

Dunbar-Ortiz says indigenous people don’t dispute the facts of the white man’s version of history — the who, what, when and where — but they do very strongly dispute its essence, its truth.

Begin with the supposedly “wild” world that greeted the Europeans. She writes: “European colonialists shoved aside a large network of small and large nations whose governments, commerce, arts and sciences, agriculture, technologies, theologies, philosophies, and institutions were intricately developed nations that maintained sophisticated relations with one another and with the environments that supported them.”

Therein lies one of the book’s few weaknesses: If they were so advanced, why were they so easily conquered? Dunbar-Ortiz only hints at the answer — the Europeans had far superior weapons — but she never specifically names it.

Nevertheless, records prove the newly arrived European settlers tried to exterminate the indigenous people, and they almost succeeded.

They stole the native land; starved the locals by burning their crops and slaughtering their main source food, the buffalo; unmercifully massacred their unarmed women and children; and purposefully introduced diseases they knew would kill large numbers of

Indians. Dunbar-Ortiz writes that genocide is “too nice a word” to describe what white supremacist Europeans did to the indigenous North Americans.

She names some of the worst offenders, and uses their own quotes and actions to back up her words. She names George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Calvin, Andrew Jackson, James Monroe, Abraham Lincoln, Walt Whitman, John Smith, William Sherman, Robert E. Lee, L. Frank Baum and Theodore Roosevelt, among others. Even John F. Kennedy bragged about the colonialism.

But the indigenous people’s war against white supremacy is not over. Beginning in the 1960s, those who remain have been demanding that the U.S. government return land it stole from them, including most of the national and state parks. And although they are alarmingly poor, they fiercely refuse the government’s generous offers of money. They only want their land back, and they’ll accept nothing else.

This book is certain to disturb everyone who grew up sainting our Founding Fathers, but they are the very ones who should read it.

Reviewer Skip Johnson is a free-lance writer and editor based in Charleston.

Direct Link:

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20150614/PC1201/150619771/1003/us-history-obscured>

Native American students building tiny homes for homeless

A Seattle Homeless Camp could soon look different as tiny homes replace tents. Josh Green reports.

Josh Green, KING 5 News 1:52 a.m. PDT June 16, 2015



TULALIP – More than a dozen Native American pre-apprentice students studying construction hope the tiny houses they've built will help homeless people get back on their feet.

During the last weeks, the students at The Tulalip Construction Training Center have constructed two tiny houses, about 8' x 12' and the size of a bedroom, that are earmarked for Nickelsville Homeless Encampment in Seattle.

"I feel like it could turn someone around," said Philip Falcon, a 21-year old from the Coeur D'Alene Tribe in Idaho. "A roof over their head, they feel secure. They can secure themselves and move on."

Sharon Lee, Executive Director of The Low Income Housing Institute said the group paid for the wood and materials, about \$1,800 total, and that they hope eventually 15 homes will go on church-owned property.

"We have had a woman with a broken leg in a wheelchair. She's a victim of domestic violence," Lee said about Nickelsville as she stood in one of the houses Monday. "She's in a wheelchair with a broken leg and a little kid living in a tent. It's absurd."

Each shelter is smaller than 120 square feet, which falls under less strict permitting rules in the city of Seattle. Lee said these homes have insulation and could eventually be hooked up for lighting or heat as they work with the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd to host the houses at a new site in the Central District.

"It makes a big difference. We've had so many families with young children and the kids are - can you imagine - trying to do their homework by flashlight? So here at least there will be electricity," she said. "This will feel like - not the perfect home. But it'll feel like a home with privacy, with walls."

Before students received a diploma and a ceremonial hammer from the Tulalip Tribal Employment Rights Office Monday, they heard from John Hord, who currently lives in a tent at Nickelsville. Hord is a Chippewa from Minnesota and a carpenter. About four and a half months ago, he lost his housing.

"Nickelsville isn't about being accepted into Nickelsville - here's where I'm going to stay the rest of my life - Nickelsville is a platform to build on and make the next step in life," he said. "Way into the future - hopefully 15, 20 years from now those structures are still going to be changing people's lives."

Direct Link: <http://www.king5.com/story/news/local/2015/06/15/tulalip-students-build-tiny-homes-for-homeless/28790913/>

State to create new Office of American Indian Health

By LISA BAUMANN - Associated Press - Tuesday, June 16, 2015

HELENA, Mont. (AP) - Gov. Steve Bullock has signed an executive order to establish a state Office of American Indian Health, saying the current health care system in Indian Country limits access to quality health care services and providers.

Bullock issued the directive Tuesday afternoon with tribal leaders at the conclusion of the Montana Tribal Leaders' Summit at the Capitol.

The office will consist of one new full-time employee in the Department of Public Health and Human Services. Officials say they don't know yet how much it will cost the state.

Montana tribal leaders last year pressed officials to overhaul the federal health care system for Native Americans, citing a shortage of trained medical personnel and misdiagnosed illnesses among problems they've experienced.

The average life expectancy for American Indians in Montana is 20 years shorter than for non-Indians.

Read more: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/jun/16/gov-to-address-native-american-health-disparities/#ixzz3dLAFwnRB>

Canada confronts 'cultural genocide' against aboriginal people

US should follow Canada's lead and reckon with its own destructive legacy

June 16, 2015 2:00AM ET
by [Lauren Carasik](#)

On May 31 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) [released a summary](#) of its report on the history and legacy of the nation's residential schools. The report concluded that Canada's aboriginal policy, designed "to eliminate aboriginal governments ... and cause aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious and racial entities in Canada," has caused unspeakable and enduring suffering that amounts to "cultural genocide."

The U.S. also had a shameful program of [residential schools](#) for its Native American children, often operated by churches with government funding. A reckoning for the destructive legacy of forced assimilation is long overdue. It's time for the U.S. to follow Canada's lead in establishing a truth and reconciliation commission and acknowledge the havoc its policies have wrought.

Canada's legacy

Started in the 1880s, the schools were funded by Canadian government but run primarily by churches. An estimated 150,000 aboriginal children attended the residential schools during their century-long tenure. But the goal was never to educate the children. Instead, the schools were designed to destroy aboriginal culture by removing children from reservations and severing ties with parents and communities, in order to inculcate 'civilized' and Christian values. The last residential school closed in 1998, but the aftereffects continue to exact a devastating toll today. This is true not only for those haunted by their stay at the schools but for the entire community of aboriginals whose culture and systems of government were targeted for annihilation.

Many of the 80,000 survivors recounted their harrowing tales of forced separation from their communities and brutal physical, sexual and psychological abuse to the Commission. And the TRC found that more than 3,000 aboriginal children perished in the in residential schools from abuse, neglect and illness. Justice Murray Sinclair, chair of the TRC, estimated that the [figure could be far](#) higher, since shoddy record keeping obscured the Commission's final accounting.

The TRC was formed as part of the 2006 Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, in the largest class-action lawsuit in Canadian history. In 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper acknowledged and [apologized](#) for the harm caused by Canada's residential schools. But he has [refused to commit](#) to implementing the Commission's [94 recommendations](#), including provisions for health, education, justice and commemoration. Canada cannot simply close this sordid chapter and move on. Instead, it must enact policies and programs that would ensure aboriginal communities have the support, tools and resources to heal and thrive.

The grave injustices of North American residential schools and their aftermath are clear. But seeking and speaking the truth is only the beginning of a long process of reconciliation.

[“Kill the Indian in him, and save the man,”](#) Richard Pratt, a U.S. Army officer who pioneered the concept of off-reservation boarding schools opined in an oft-quoted 1892 speech. At the time, Pratt's goal of cultural rather than physical genocide, though despicable, was less extreme for its time than that of others who advocated for the outright extermination of the nation's native people.

But, as in Canada, the U.S. schools served their intended purpose of demolishing Native American traditions and history. [Thousands of children died](#) from abuse, neglect and malnutrition. Others were harshly punished for residual ties to their culture or spirituality. And the schools often pushed boys toward manual labor and girls to domestic service. As a 2009 United Nations report concluded, instead of working toward full integration [“the training](#) prepared Native children to be assimilated into the bottom of the socio-economic ladder,” where many continue to struggle.

The historical [trauma](#) inflicted on parents can haunt subsequent generations. Researchers found stress hormone adaptations in the children of [Holocaust survivors](#), perhaps caused in utero, that may predispose them to ill health. And the effect is not limited to environmental factors: it may actually be woven into DNA. This [trauma](#) may partly explain the social ills that continue to plague Native communities both in the U.S. and Canada, including high rates of addiction, mental illness, domestic and sexual violence, family disintegration and poor physical health. Reservations in the U.S. experience [suicide epidemics](#), and though the reasons are not clear, there is agreement that one of the factors is “the legacy of federally funded boarding schools that forcibly removed generations of Native American children from their homes,” according to The New York Times.

Need for reparations

The U.S. has made some efforts to end its history of forced assimilation. For example, in 1978 Congress passed the Indian Child Welfare Act to keep Native American children with their families or communities. But nearly 40 years later, the law has failed to meet its mark, and Native American children are still being fostered and adopted into communities that fail to reflect their cultural heritage. Last month a commission in Maine found that the state placed [five times](#) as many Native American children in foster care as non-native children. Maine is hardly alone: In 2013, advocates in Nebraska linked a spike in the number of the state’s Native American children in foster care to [the legacy of boarding schools](#). And placement of children within their communities for fostering and adoption is hampered in part by [lack of appropriate homes](#).

That shortage, which reflects the damage inflicted by governmental policy, reinforces the need for comprehensive reparations to heal and rebuild damaged communities. The specifics of a reparations package must be crafted and embraced by Native American groups. It would likely include individual and collective restitution, restoration and truth telling.

The grave injustices of North American residential schools and their aftermath are clear. But seeking and speaking the truth is only the beginning of a long process of reconciliation. Both Canada and the U.S. must commit to atoning for the schools’ horrors by expending political capital and economic resources to help Native communities truly recover.

Lauren Carasik is a clinical professor of law and the director of the international human rights clinic at the Western New England University School of Law.

Direct Link: <http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2015/6/canada-confronts-cultural-genocide-against-aboriginal-people.html>

Gold miners invade Amazonian indigenous reserve

Analysis of satellite images reveal penetration in protected area and large-scale clearing of buffer zone, reports [Mongabay](#)

Rhett A Butler, for Mongabay, part of the Guardian Environment Network

Wednesday 17 June 2015 13.04 BST

Illegal miners have invaded an indigenous reserve in the Peruvian Amazon, reveals new analysis of satellite imagery.

The research, published by the Monitoring of the Andean Amazon Project (MAAP), shows that small-scale miners have penetrated the Amarakaeri communal reserve, a protected area co-managed by Peru's parks authority (Sernanp) and the Harakmbut, Yine and Machiguenga indigenous peoples. While only 26 acres of the reserve have been stripped of trees, large-scale clearing of the reserve's buffer zone suggests there is reason for concern.

"Our analysis shows that gold mining deforestation, expanding from Huepetuhe/Delta-1, entered the southeast corner of the reserve in 2013 and expanded in 2014 and 2015," states MAAP in [a blog](#), referring to expansion from the massive Huepetuhe mine nearby. "We also show that gold mining deforestation is spreading within the reserve's south-eastern buffer zone."

The incursion was detected using CLASlite, software that allows users to track deforestation and forest degradation using satellite data from different sources. The gold mining activity was confirmed using high resolution Spot imagery.

Gold mining in the region is extensive. [Research published in 2013](#) by Greg Asner of the Carnegie Institution for Science and Stanford University found that the extent of mining in Peru's Madre de Dios expanded from less than 10,000 hectares in 1999 to more than 50,000 ha as of September 2012. Rising gold prices combined with increased access to the region fueled the increase.

The impact of gold mining extends well beyond forest clearing. Other studies have documented an increase in [mercury pollution in downstream areas](#), including elevated concentrations [in fish sold in markets](#) in major cities like Puerto Maldonado. Mining camps are also associated with increased hunting and [a range of social ills](#), including violence, prostitution, and drug use.

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/jun/17/gold-miners-invade-amazonian-indigenous-reserve>

Papal encyclical gives hope to indigenous people

Pope Francis' Earth-friendly message embraces our values and way of life

June 16, 2015 1:00PM ET

by [Victoria Tauli-Corpuz](#)

On Thursday, Pope Francis will issue a highly anticipated encyclical on man, religion and the environment, a text that is expected to influence the outcome of the Paris climate talks in December.

We know already what side he is on.

During a January [visit](#) to typhoon-ravaged villages in the Philippines — my home country — he called on humanity to protect the earth, which he called “a beautiful garden for the human family.” And he captured headlines last year when he called the destruction of South America’s rainforests a “[sin](#).”

To the world’s 370 million indigenous people, many of whom live in overlooked and remote corners of the world, the Pope’s words offer hope — regardless of whether they share his spiritual beliefs. As some of the first victims of climate change by virtue of their dependence on the world’s natural resources, these communities are finding themselves on the front lines of the environmental crisis. They are playing David against governments and developers eager to destroy their pristine forests, fields and streams to build mines, dams and agricultural plantations, all in the name of what the Pope calls a “throw-away” economic system.

Far too many indigenous activists have become martyrs of this movement. A [recent Global Witness report](#) estimated that last year alone, 116 environmental activists died while trying to protect their lands from developers, as well as illegal loggers, drug traffickers and others whose criminal activities destroy our forests. Among these mostly indigenous fighters were seven activists from Argentina, the Pope’s homeland.

Ecuador, of course, was host to one of the first and most notorious cases of environmental violence against forest-dwelling indigenous peoples. Between the 1970s and the 1990s, Chevron knowingly dumped billions of gallons of toxic waste and oil into the rivers in the Ecuadorian Amazon, destroying streams, forests and farmlands and inflicting birth defects, cancer and poverty on six indigenous groups living there.

These groups fought back with lawsuits in the U.S. and Ecuador, but after more than two decades of protracted court battles, Chevron has failed to concede it did wrong. This case revealed to the world the agonizing difficulty of providing a level playing field to indigenous peoples, who are most vulnerable to climate change, and most vital in finding

a way to slow it down. Yet the case hasn't succeeded in stopping the violence that continues to endanger indigenous peoples.

The climate talks in Paris will fail if negotiators don't acknowledge the link between indigenous people and the health of the world's natural resources.

Though often framed by land developers and government officials in some countries as a selfish refusal to embrace modernity and a new way of life, this quest to save indigenous lands and forests is motivated by a profound spiritual belief in the need to protect Mother Earth. Whether the voices come from the indigenous communities of Paraguay's threatened Chaco forests or the First Nations of Canada, I hear the same message on every continent: Forest peoples seek to honor the spirits of our elders and ensure that future generations can preserve their traditions and lifestyle.

Their work benefits us all. Curbing the activities of large corporations that grab and destroy our lands means reducing the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere. Preventing deforestation helps, too: Forests function like the planet's lungs, filtering and cleaning the air. Studies have shown that the 513 million hectares of forests that indigenous communities protect store 37.7 billion tons of carbon, making indigenous peoples a potent and valuable weapon in global efforts to end climate change.

In recent speeches on the climate, the Pope has stressed humanity's duty "to till the earth and to keep it." For centuries, indigenous peoples who sustainably manage their forests have embodied this harmonious relationship between people and their natural surroundings. Communities across the globe have successfully "kept" their forests while "tilling" them with the utmost care to secure sustainable income sources, from wild honey and wax to fruits and fish. They take just enough to live and thrive — nothing more.

The Pope would certainly agree that indigenous people offer invaluable lessons to a world seeking a sustainable future that eschews what he calls the "plunder" of nature. It's time for leaders, CEOs and investors who say they care about the environment to finally acknowledge that indigenous people are a major part of the solution to global warming. And governments, on their part, should grant indigenous people strong, unambiguous rights over the land where they live. Researchers have [shown](#) that deforestation rates are significantly lower in community-managed forests where rights are strong and reinforced by local and national authorities.

The international community should take notice, too: The upcoming climate talks in Paris will fall short of reaching a comprehensive solution if negotiators do not acknowledge this link between indigenous rights and the health of the world's natural resources.

As a member of the Kankana-ey Igorot in the Philippines, I, like the Pope, was deeply touched by the destruction left in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan. My indigenous brothers and sisters lost their homes, boats and livelihoods, and are recovering from the trauma still. They live simple, sustainable lives, in harmony with the forests, oceans and

mountains around them, yet end up bearing the worst effects of climate change. They are not alone. In the Andes of Peru, melting glaciers threaten the lives of the indigenous Quechua, and in the northern stretches of Scandinavia and Finland, Sami herders are seeing reindeer populations drop as the weather warms. And in the Amazon forests of Ecuador, Brazil and Bolivia, indigenous peoples are [finding their rainforests are drying out](#).

We hope that having a visionary Pope on our side will help the world to realize that it is best for indigenous people, the environment and the rest of humanity when we are free to focus on preserving our collective “beautiful garden” for future generations — instead of fighting for our lives.

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz is the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Direct Link: <http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2015/6/how-the-pope-gives-hope-to-indigenous-people.html>

Multi-National Still Harassing Indigenous Woman, Says Family; Have Her Fenced In

[Rick Kearns](#)

6/17/15

The multinational Yanacocha mining company is again violently harassing her, says the indigenous Peruvian activist who won a major lawsuit brought against her by the company in late 2014.

Yanacocha Inc. has released a few press statements asserting that they were protecting their property and nothing else.

However, Maxima Acuña de Chaupe and family members are saying that the company is illegally attacking them and their home.

In the last three weeks mining officials have erected another fence around her property, closed a key road to the home of Acuña de Chaupe, as well as tore down an addition to her home her family was building according to the indigenous activist.

Acuña de Chaupe and family members said the first incident occurred on May 22 while the activist and her husband, Jaime Chaupe, were in the nearby city of Chelendin, attending a hearing of a legal action taken against them by Yanacocha.

The activist’s daughter Ysidora, spoke to the press the following day to assert that Peruvian police had entered the property, tore down the addition and assaulted her other sister-in-law, Maribel Gil Briones, who was alone at the site when the officers appeared.

Then on June 2, according to a press release issued by the Peruvian human rights agency, Grufides, the company closed the Las Pozadas - Chugurmayo – Sorochucho Road, an ancestral byway used by many generations of the activists family. By doing so the family is effectively blocked from reaching an important local town where they do business.

“They impeded our mobility when they displaced us from Cajamarca to Santa Rosa before, and today they closed the road we use to walk with our animals from my house to Sorochuco,” Acuña de Chaupe said.

“This attitude of the Yanacocha Mining Company is another assault against the people’s right to travel freely in the local territory, preventing Maxima from taking her products to the market and obtaining some goods for support of her children,” according to the Grufides press release.

The activist has contacted local authorities and the regional Ombudsman to avoid the abuses of the company which have become regular and more frequent in the last year.

Then on June 9, the activist announced that the company had recently constructed a metal fence that blocked another route to the markets used by the family.

In recalling a conversation Acuña de Chaupe had with a Yanacocha representative she said the rep told her, “We want a dialogue, and I replied, What dialogue do you want? Are you going to recognize my property? Are you going to recognize all the harm you’ve done to my family?”

As of press time, no announcement of further investigations into the charges has been made by Peruvian authorities.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/06/17/multi-national-still-harassing-indigenous-woman-says-family-have-her-fenced-160751>

Pope Francis: Indigenous Peoples 'Should Be the Principal Dialogue Partners' on Projects

[ICTMN Staff](#)

6/18/15

Pope Francis has released his encyclical on climate change, with Indigenous Peoples’ cultural and land rights as major factors both underlying the issues and in seeking solutions.

Indigenous Peoples' spiritual connection with the environment makes common sense, the 192-page document implies.

“Many intensive forms of environmental exploitation and degradation not only exhaust the resources which provide local communities with their livelihood, but also undo the social structures which, for a long time, shaped cultural identity and their sense of the meaning of life and community,” the Pope wrote. “The disappearance of a culture can be just as serious, or even more serious, than the disappearance of a species of plant or animal. The imposition of a dominant lifestyle linked to a single form of production can be just as harmful as the altering of ecosystems.”

He goes on to outline something that sounds very much like consultation and prior, informed consent.

“In this sense, it is essential to show special care for indigenous communities and their cultural traditions,” His Holiness wrote. “They are not merely one minority among others, but should be the principal dialogue partners, especially when large projects affecting their land are proposed. For them, land is not a commodity but rather a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space with which they need to interact if they are to maintain their identity and values. When they remain on their land, they themselves care for it best. Nevertheless, in various parts of the world, pressure is being put on them to abandon their homelands to make room for agricultural or mining projects which are undertaken without regard for the degradation of nature and culture.”

Moreover, Indigenous Peoples hold one of the keys to a solution for the climate crisis, he said.

“In some places, cooperatives are being developed to exploit renewable sources of energy which ensure local self-sufficiency and even the sale of surplus energy,” the Pope wrote. “This simple example shows that, while the existing world order proves powerless to assume its responsibilities, local individuals and groups can make a real difference. They are able to instill a greater sense of responsibility, a strong sense of community, a readiness to protect others, a spirit of creativity and a deep love for the land. They are also concerned about what they will eventually leave to their children and grandchildren. These values are deeply rooted in indigenous peoples.”

Pope Francis calls for a partnership between science and religion and suggests that the scriptures may have been misinterpreted when it comes to mastery over stewardship. He also links global warming, climate change and poverty, making social justice an environmental issue, as the [*Washington Post*](#) pointed out.

Read the full report, [On Care for Our Common Home](#).

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/06/18/pope-francis-indigenous-peoples-should-be-principal-dialogue-partners-projects-160778>